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Black councillors organise
Paddy Meehan's incredible case

OCT 14 1982

G.F. NEWMAN

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Beirut solves nothing

THERE IS NO immediate solution to the problems of the Middle East. Two principles – each valid – are in conflict in an inadequate geographic area. The history and the bitterness is such that it is impossible for a remotely stable solution to emerge from the present generation of political leaders on either side. But there are events that set back further any hope of a solution even in the long-term and even for the next generation. Beirut 1982 has been such an event.

It has been, politically and militarily, a serious failure for the Israeli government. For the first time, public opinion in this country and in Western Europe has not on balance been on the Israeli side in a war with the Arabs. Much more important for future Israeli politics, the bombing of Beirut has lost the Israeli government substantial support in the United States. The open ruthlessness with which the Israeli armed forces have bombed civilian populations in order to get at the PLO guerrillas in West Beirut has scandalised American and other television audiences night after night.

Any hint of criticism of any action by any Israeli government runs the risk of being attacked as evidence of crypto- anti-semitism. The force of the pan-Jewish patriotism – the strong feeling of 'Our Israel, right or wrong' – is an understandable outgrowth of centuries of history. It is understandable, but it contributes no more to a solution to difficult political problems than other conventional kinds of unthinking patriotism.

It is certainly true that most hostile commentators outside Israel fail to accept, or even recognise, that the governments which sponsored the foundation of the State of Israel were not facing the reality of the situation that they were creating. For the most part, the foundation of Israel was for Western public opinion a way of disposing of a collective debt of guilt about the treatment of Jews over centuries, and particularly in this century. After that, it was somehow hoped that the problem would solve itself.

But to understand the near-impossible historical context of Arab-Israeli relations is still not to forgive the Lebanon invasion. It has been a serious political mistake. Since the Begin government would not have embarked on such a venture without the understanding and tacit support of the United States, it is a mistake in which Washington must share the blame.

The initial Israeli war aim was a pre-emptive strike into the political vacuum of the Lebanon in order to destroy the military arm of the PLO. The aim was misconceived, for it is not possible to destroy for ever a liberation movement with such established roots. The execution was misconceived for in the end the PLO's tactics meant that Israel became militarily and morally bogged down around East Beirut – unable to pull back without looking ineffective, unable to advance without killing unarmed civilians and children in large numbers.

Beirut 1982, however, is a turning point for the Middle East in a far more fundamental way. The question is no longer one of whether the State of Israel will survive. Of course it will. It is only necessary to think for a moment what would happen if Arab armies were doing to the remnant of the Israel army pinned down in Tel Aviv what the Israeli's have been doing to the PLO in Beirut. The Russians may choose not to exert themselves for the PLO. The Americans would stop the military suppression of Israel and anyone who thinks for a moment knows it.

It is not the continuation of the State of Israel that is in question. It is only the method by which its security will be secured. There are only two choices. The first is that, in the crab-like manner of all advances in Middle East politics, slow progress is made towards a peace settlement, based on the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO. The details of such a possible future settlement are still very cloudy. But the foundations would have to be an explicit recognition of Israel's right to exist from the PLO and an equally explicit recognition of a Palestinian homeland and autonomy by Israel. (This last would, however, have to go substantially further than the present debating attempt to suggest that Palestinians already have a homeland in the form of the Kingdom of Jordan.)

The second choice is a continued expansion of what can only be described as Israeli imperialism beyond existing borders. Since the area of Israel is not militarily viable, in the absence of regional non-aggression agreements in which people have faith, Israel with American support will continue to look for satraps and client states about its borders.

Tragically, the Begin government has systematically destroyed the hopes (which were real enough for those who wished to see them) of a move towards political understandings with the PLO. The level of PLO military activity in the past year did not in any way justify the affront that has occurred and the Israeli government knows it. Mr Begin of all people also ought to know that guerrilla activists, whatever they may have said or done in the past, are capable of sitting down as responsible politicians at a negotiating table when the historic process has reached the right point. The attempt to 'solve' the Palestinian problem by force was doomed to failure. The waves set off as the PLO disperses through the Arab world will create an even less stable environment for Mr Begin's successors for years to come. □

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Patrick Wintour reports on the electrician union's support for the NHS

Fight for fair press coverage

FLEET STREET electricians' decision to stop Wednesday's national newspapers in sympathy with the healthworkers' pay dispute had substantial support in the NHS unions. Both TUC general secretary Len Murray and Cohse general secretary Albert Spanswick (also chairman of the TUC Health Services Committee) asked for the action to be called off once the Newspapers Publishers Association began to seek an injunction to stop Wednesday's strike. They felt the issues of the defiance the Prior legislation and of press freedom might smother coverage of the pay claim. Sogat '82 and the NGA complied with Spanswick. The electricians did not. However NUPE General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe told the *NS*:

> The electricians have responded to a call from the TUC to take sympathetic action in support of our claim. There's nothing wrong with that. Some employer was going to take up the Tories' union legislation eventually. Now it's happened. It's up to the NPA to back down over its contempt of court proceedings.

Elaine Harrison, Nalgo National Health Organiser, also said she 'wholeheartedly welcomed the electricians action which will hearten all health service workers.' It does not appear that Mr Spanswick consulted other health service union leaders before asking the printworkers to call off their action. He says he intervened only as General Secretary of Cohse.

The left-wing, 1300-strong press branch, is a virtually autonomous force within Frank Chapple's electricians' union and for many years has acted as a form of political asylum for dissidents within the union.

The electricians' action comes at the end of a series of moves to ensure fair press coverage of the NHS dispute. In early June, NUPE wrote to every chapel (office branch) leader in Fleet Street, asking them to ensure fair coverage. On 22 June and again on 18-19 July print unions pressed for statements or advertisements to be inserted in papers in support of the NHS unions.

At the *Observer*, 186,000 copies were lost on 18 July before a statement was inserted in the paper.

This week the print unions adopted different tactics. The NGA were expected to stop papers if the proprietors refused to print a statement prepared by the TUC Health Services Committee secretary. Sogat '82 favoured stopping papers on Wednesday regardless. It appears that the Newspaper Publishers Association was better prepared this time, refused to print any statements and quickly sought injunctions.

Sean Geraghy, secretary of the press electricians, says that 'if the case is brought on Friday and I lose it will be up the branch to decide whether we pay the fine or go to prison.' □

Jane Houlton on starting a new business

Discrimination against women

AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME to help the unemployed start up in business discriminates against many married women – because they are ineligible for benefits. Six unemployed women in Coventry who wanted to form a co-operative, Wholesome Food, to run a vegetarian restaurant have been refused help on these grounds.

The Enterprise Allowance scheme was set up by the government six months ago, with £2.5 million, as a pilot scheme in three areas – Medway, Coventry and part of Lancashire. People who have been unemployed for at least three months can receive an allowance of £40 a week for the first year of trading, provided they put at least £1,000 of their own money into the business.

The scheme is intended to help the unemployed who would like to work for themselves, but who cannot risk losing benefits in the early days before their new business can support them. It is also aimed at those who are made redundant and who will lose entitlement to supplementary benefit because they receive a large lump sum as redundancy pay. Under this scheme the redundancy money can be used to set up a business, with no loss of benefits for the worker.

The scheme has, in its first few months, been popular. Thousands of applications have been received and 724 people have been accepted. Businesses (mainly one-person, self-employed) range from a hang-gliding school through a sausage manufacturer to a dial-a-curry service. There are indications that the scheme will be extended to other parts of the country. But as John Goodman, a co-operative development worker in Coventry, said: 'It's a good little scheme, it's working well; but it has one enormous drawback – it's sexist.'

The catch for many married women is that applicants have to be *receiving* benefits at the time of applying. Many married women, even if registered unemployed, get neither unemployment nor supplementary benefit. No married woman can receive supplementary benefit. Even if her husband is unemployed as well and receiving supplementary benefit, the woman is classed as a dependant and is not 'receiving benefits' for the purposes of this scheme. Women who in the past have paid lower rate NI contributions (the 'married woman's stamp') simply do not get unemployment benefit. And other married women, who have paid Class I contributions and seen their unemployment benefit run out after 12 months, cannot then claim supplementary benefit as men can do. Thus many unemployed women, as the women in Coventry have found to their cost, are quite simply excluded from the scheme.

Pat Milner of the MSC Jobcentre in Coventry, which administers the scheme, explained the thinking behind it: 'The idea was to cushion people when they go into business. They had to be losing benefits. We can't cushion people who have nothing to lose and if they're not receiving benefits, they can't be eligible.' A spokesman for the MSC pointed out that ten married women had been accepted for the scheme in Coventry; and while he conceded that it was 'very true' that there were problems for many women, 'the MSC is bound by the conditions of the DHSS and by rules outside our making'. □

Duncan Campbell on weapons shipments

Nuclear convoy

THIS HEAVILY GUARDED RAF convoy crossed Britain at least twice during July, and was seen in Devon and Suffolk. This is probably the first photograph to be taken of a nuclear weapons convoy and its vehicles.

This picture was taken by a private photographer at Ivybridge, Devon, north of Plymouth early on Saturday, 10 July. In the early evening of the 24 July, two weeks later, a similar convoy was seen again by a CND official travelling around the A45 bypass of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. The road it took goes to RAF Honington, where there is a nuclear weapons store for RAF Buccaneers. Aircraft based there would attack Warsaw Pact ships or Soviet Baltic coast cities in war.

The convoy comprised five heavily armoured lorries of a unique design. Flanking the lorries were two Royal Air Force vans carrying armed police, and MoD police outriders. The convoy, here shown on the Ivybridge bypass, was followed by a fire tender and a specially converted emergency control bus (not shown) seen to contain a rack of rifles, a considerable array of special communications equipment, provision for further armed escorts, and two motor cycles. The extraordinary security and safety precautions taken conform to those required for nuclear weapons transport in the United States (British safety regulations for transporting nuclear weapons are not published).

Observers also reported seeing two officials escorting the Devon convoy who appeared to be wearing American uniforms. This would be required if the nuclear weapons being transported were American in origin; if so, the convoy would almost certainly have left from RAF St Mawgan, Cornwall, where a US Naval Aviation Weapons Facility guards nuclear weapons reserved for wartime use by British, Dutch, and Belgian anti-submarine units.

Questioned by journalists last week, the Ministry of Defence suggested that the Devon convoy might be a shipment of munitions unloaded from the Atlantic Causeway which recently docked in Plymouth. However, on 10 July that ship had not reached Plymouth. Officials of the Ivybridge Labour Party, who initially received the photographs, questioned the Ministry of Defence about the contents and safety of the shipment. But the standard official answer to any direct question about nuclear weapons invariably goes no further than 'we cannot confirm or deny. . .'. □

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Law Centre faces closure reports Nick Anning

Support withheld

A WEST London Law Centre serving 150,000 people is threatened with closure after only three years. The Hammersmith centre, which has a staff of ten, heard on 2 August that Hammersmith borough council, where the Conservatives hold power by means of support from two Liberal councillors, had voted not to pay its annual support grant of £112,000 from next April. The Law Centre depends entirely on this grant, three-quarters of which is recovered by the council from the Department of the Environment under the Hammersmith Inner Area Programme – an arrangement which was to continue until November 1984.

Only a month ago, on 5 July, Tory council leader Kim Howe and Chief Executive Tony Allen had paid an amicable visit to the offices at 106-108 King Street, Hammersmith, to discuss the centre's work and a report submitted by an assistant chief executive to the Leader's Co-ordinating Committee on 28 July had commented favourably on the centre. In the three years since it was set up, Hammersmith Law Centre has dealt with some 5,000 cases, around 40 per cent of which concerned housing matters, and, the report went on to note . . . even with the Law Centre there was still unmet need in the borough'.

The grant decision may have followed remarks by a Law Centre worker at a public forum on 26 July, arranged by the local Police Liaison Committee. Sheena York, who specialises in work on juvenile crime, race and immigration, raised criticisms based on the Law Centre staff's working experience, and backed up by an informal survey carried out earlier this year by a part-time Law Centre worker at local courts.

She reported routine breaches of Judges Rules by local police and refusal of access to a solicitor for detained juveniles, as well as instances of violent treatment and verbal abuse by police of juveniles in custody.

Police members on the panel, including the Commander of the local 'F' District, his Chief Superintendent and Chief Inspector Ward, Chief Community Relations Officer, refused to be drawn and appeared to brush these criticisms aside. Since then, strong hints have emerged from the town hall that the Law Centre's case for renewal of its grant was 'not helped' by Ms York's contribution.

Following the Law Centre's annual general meeting this week a staff member told the *NS*: 'We now have a determined campaign under way to protect this vital service. Our work is often not popular with the council, but if we didn't act for tenants with repair problems, and children in care, or speak out for young people in trouble with the police, we wouldn't be doing our job properly.' □

Rob Edwards reports on Tory tactics in Lothian

Successful fundraising

THE DIRECTORS and chairmen of 25 Edinburgh-based companies were invited to a reception this week by the Conservatives on Lothian Regional Council in return for the £2,000 they donated towards the Tories' sucessful election campaign in May.

The Tories' main election platform was a promise to reduce the rates – a policy that was implemented almost immediately with the crucial support of the three Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance councillors who now hold the balance of power. The companies have together benefited from the reduction to the tune of nearly £500,000.

The businessmen were given the opportunity at Wednesday's reception to lobby key Council chairmen and to meet the transport under-secretary Lynda Chalker who is described by the Tories as a 'very interesting and successful minister'.

This glimpse into the workings of the Tory establishment comes from some private correspondence which 'came into the hands' of Lothian's opposition Labour group. It consists of invitations to the reception and a guest list naming prominent local industrialists who aided the rates campaign. Among those listed are Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple, the director of Scottish and Newcastle Breweries (which recouped at least £230,000 in rates); John Menzies, chairman of the company that bears his name (which gained nearly £75,000); Robert Douglas-Miller of Jenners, the famous Edinburgh department store (£53,000); and Norman Mackinnon the chairman of the Drambuie liqueur company (£12,300).

On receipt of the information the Labour group wrote to each company demanding to know how much they had donated. The Tories, claiming that the document had been stolen, contacted the companies and advised them not to answer the question. However Scottish and Newcastle has told the press it gave £500, Jenners has admitted to a figure of £250 and a Tory spokesman said the total was £2,000. Labour councillors are also concerned that many companies on the list are on the Council's register of approved contractors.

Labour's first attempt to publicise the leaked information was via the local commercial station, Radio Forth. A sympathetic journalist twice tried to use the story but was told by senior news staff that it was not news and would not be broadcast. It is presumably a coincidence that the chairman of Radio Forth, M. Harper-Gow, from Christian Salvesen Ltd, is one of those listed as a contributor to Tory funds. □

Fiona Mallon on rape law

Women's past still on trial

A LOOPHOLE in the 1976 Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act is helping to perpetuate the idea that there is a link between a woman's sexual past and the likelihood of her having consented to an alleged rape.

The '76 Act was supposed to endorse the principle that a woman's previous sexual experience with partners of her choice could not be taken in the course of a rape trial to indicate either untruthfulness or an overall willingness to consent to intercourse. However, a loophole in the Act allows the trial judge to permit such evidence or allow cross-examination if he is satisfied that it would be unfair to the defendant to exclude it.

An investigation of 50 contested rape cases has shown that judges are widely practising this discretion. Zsusanna Adler, writing in the *New Law Journal* reports her discovery that applications to bring evidence of prior sexual history are 'by no means as rare as had been hoped'. They were made in 60 per cent of cases where the defence raised the question of the woman's consent and the overwhelming majority of these were successful.

'In 75 per cent of the trials, judges allowed at least some questioning to take place about the women's sexual experience with persons other than the accused', she reports. 'This indicates that trial judges, in the absence of any guiding principles, continue to err on the side of the defendant and are on the whole very reluctant to exclude any evidence of this sort.' □

Peter Kellner on the Privy Councillor's oath

Now hear this . . .

LAST SATURDAY, Radio Four's *Talking Politics* carried an inquiry into the workings of the Privy Council. A fascinating programme it was too, about the strange workings of this strange institution – except for one thing. 'We have not been able to obtain a copy of the Privy Councillor's oath', said the presenter, Hugo Young.

A telephone call to the *New Statesman* library of constitutional secrets would have provided him with a copy of the oath; although whether he would have been much the wiser is another matter. Here it is.

The Oath of Allegiance

You do swear by Almighty God that you will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law.

SO HELP YOU GOD.

The Oath of a Privy Counsellor

You do swear by Almighty God to be a true and faithful servant of the Queen's Majesty, as one of Her Privy Council. You will not know or understand of any manner of thing to be attempted, done, or spoken against Her Majesty's Person, Honour, Crown or Dignity Royal, but you will lett and withstand the same to the uttermost of your Power, and either cause it to be revealed to Her Majesty Herself, or to such of Her Privy Council as shall advertise Her Majesty of the same. You will, in all things to be moved, treated, and debated in Council, faithfully and truly declare your Mind and Opinion, according to your Heart and Conscience; and will keep secret all Matters committed and revealed unto you, or that shall be treated of secretly in Council. And if any of the said Treaties or Counsels shall touch any of the Counsellors, you will not reveal it unto him, but will keep the same until such time as, by the Consent of Her Majesty, or of the Council, Publication shall be made thereof. You will to your uttermost bear Faith and Allegiance unto the Queen's Majesty; and will assist and defend all Jurisdictions, Pre-eminences, and Authorities, granted to Her Majesty, and annexed to the Crown by Acts of Parliament, or otherwise, against All Foreign Princes, Persons, Prelates, States or Potentates. And generally in all things you will do as a faithful and true Servant ought to do to his Majesty.

SO HELP YOU GOD.

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PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Bureaucrats versus free choice

LAST WINTER Mr Brian Radley and his common-law wife, Ms Michelle Williams, decided that their second child should be born at home. They informed the West Midlands Area Health Authority of their wishes. Mrs Mary Evans, a highly experienced local midwife, visited the couple; she regarded their wishes as unreasonable, and refused to arrange a home confinement. Two weeks after Mrs Evans's visit, the couple's child was born safely into Mr Radley's arms at home.

The health authority did not approve. Mr Radley's actions, they felt, contravened the 1951 Midwives Act. He was prosecuted on the grounds that 'being a male person, you attended a birth otherwise than under the direction and supervision of a duly qualified medical practitioner'. Under the Act, Mr Radley was only entitled to deliver his own child if there was 'urgent necessity' for him to do so. The health authority argued that there was not; the magistrate agreed. Last Friday Mr Radley was fined £100.

Perhaps the most ominous aspect of the court case was hidden in the question of why, having won the case, the health authority did not press for costs to be awarded against Mr Radley. Mr Ian Morris, appearing for the authority, said it was 'because the case has been brought to protect others'. That is, a little-used part of the 1951 Act has been revived to launch a test case. Woe betide any future couple which behaves in the same way, especially in the west Midlands. Unless the magistrate's decision is reversed on appeal, a new line has been drawn, that is both medically absurd and politically dangerous, between the rights of the individual and the power of the state.

IN THE CASE of Mr Radley and Ms Williams, three issues need to be disentangled. First, are the *general* arguments against home confinements strong enough to justify the overwhelming thrust of NHS policy and resources towards the provision of hospital rather than home maternity services? Second, were the *specific* requests of Mr Radley and Ms Williams medically unreasonable? Third, what role should the law play in upholding the rights of parents?

The general argument for hospital rather than home confinements was exemplified by the introduction to the otherwise excellent *Newsnight* report on BBC-2 last Friday. It showed how births in hospital, as a proportion of all births, have risen sharply during the past 30 years, while perinatal mortality has fallen sharply. The conclusion seemed inescapable: the one caused the other, so having a baby in hospital is safer than having a baby at home.

This argument is sheer nonsense. It has been demolished so effectively by Marjorie Tew [1] that it is a wonder that anyone still deploys that particular case.

As Ms Tew says, it is dangerous to draw cause-and-effect conclusions from long-term time series that seem at first sight to go together:

> The secular decline in the mortality rates could as readily be shown to correlate with the secular increase in motorway mileage or television licences.

To show cause-and-effect, more sophisticated statistical tests need to be done. The main test is to look at the figures year by year. Do the mortality rates fall faster (or slower) than average during years

. . . a new line has been drawn, that is both medically absurd and politically dangerous, between the rights of the individual and the power of the state.

when the rate of hospital confinements rises faster (or slower) than average? When this test is applied to the figures, no clear pattern emerges. In other words, the long-term fall in mortality rates, and the long-term rise in hospital confinements, have no clear causal link: they are the separate result of different forces, to do with the pattern of NHS care, rising standards of living, and general improvements in health and nutrition.

Comparing present-day mortality rates by birth in hospital and births at homes is a hazardous business. Overall the figures for perinatal mortality at home are much higher than in hospital. But this is largely because so few births are *planned* to take place at home (about one per cent of all births) that a significant proportion of births that actually take place at home are emergencies. It is not surprising that in these circumstances many babies born at home are still-born or die within a few days. What official figures do not show is the perinatal mortality rate for births *intended* to take place at home. Analysing the studies and statistics that have been provided, Marjorie Tew concludes:

> The published statistics, as far as they go, show that the risks for infant and mother are in many categories *lower* when the birth takes place at home.

SOME PROGRESS has been made in prompting the NHS to take a more sympathetic view towards home deliveries. Shortly after the present Government came to power, the health minister, Gerald Vaughan, wrote to the National Childbirth Trust to state:

> . . . It is also our policy that mothers who choose to have their babies at home, despite the arguments against it, should be able to do so and health authorities should ensure that the necessary services are provided to make home confinement possible.

This does not concede the medical argument about where birth *should* take place; but no matter. Was the West Midlands Health Authority acting in breach of Government guidelines?

Here the issue becomes more specific. Ms Williams wanted to give birth in the 'natal crouch' position; she rejected the use of all drugs; and she wanted Mr Radley to deliver the baby – though with a midwife in attendance.

There is no consensus among doctors or midwives as to whether this is safer or riskier than other forms of birth for women like Ms Williams. It was her second pregnancy; there had been no medical problems with her first birth; she was 20 years old, and so in the age range where the risks are lowest. One of London's most experienced home-delivery GPs told me: 'I can think of no earthly reason why the couple shouldn't have had the baby the way they wanted. Dammit, people are allowed to make few enough important, unfettered choices these days. Surely where and how to give birth to one's children should be one of them.'

This is broadly the view of the National Childbirth Trust and the Radical Midwives Association.[2] But Mr Radley and Ms Williams did not have ready access to a doctor or midwife who shared the view. And because the law did not protect their right to exercise their choice in the face of contrary medical advice, they have been punished.

It would, perhaps, be a trifle unrealistic to expect the law to be changed immediately to clarify the right. There is, though, a simpler solution. Norman Fowler, the Social Services Secretary, has shown a willingness to sack health authority chairmen who step out of line with Government policy. He should now assert that parents have the unambiguous right to choose how and where their babies are born, and that any future prosecution similar to that launched by the West Midlands Area Health Authority would be an improper and inadmissible use of public funds.

That would, perhaps, spur the NHS to improve on its patchy home delivery service. My wife and I are lucky. Our GP actively supports couples who want their children born at home: the second and third of our three children were, after my wife had become disenchanted with the way she had been treated in hospital at the time of her first confinement. Had Brian Radley and Michelle Williams lived in our part of London, they would have had no trouble. Had we lived in Wolverhampton, I shudder to think what would have happened to us. □

1. *The case against hospital deliveries: the statistical evidence;* in *The Place of Birth*, edited by Sheila Kitzinger and John Davis, OUP 1978, £10.
2. Both organisations can be contacted at 9 Queensborough Terrace, London W2 3TB.

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How coppers get bent

When G. F. Newman wrote the three-part television series *Law and Order*, he was accused of exaggerating the extent of police corruption. His play *Operation Bad Apple* got the same criticism when it opened at the Royal Court Theatre in London last year. The successive revelations of the past few weeks suggest that Newman was more accurate than his critics. Here he explains why police corruption is systematic – and why Countryman-style attempts to investigate it are doomed to failure.

'ONE thing you can be absolutely sure of, no one wants corruption rooted out more than the police themselves.' Another thing you can be absolutely sure of, 'Corruption rarely goes higher than the rank of sergeant'. And, 'No one deals more ruthlessly and vigorously with their wrongdoers than the police'. 'The odd bad apple in an otherwise sound barrel' – of course. 'The public still retains a high degree of trust in the police, trust which is, for the most part, thoroughly justified.'

Pages could be filled with such clichés. And, since the successful prosecution of two City detectives resulting from Operation Countryman, they have been. Leading articles have appeared in the press, along with the thoughts of politicians such as Merlyn Rees, who wrote in *The Times* of 29 July about the roots of Countryman, and at the same time gave himself a pat on the back, as if the problem were resolved.

Worthy old proposals have been revived. The most recent to be resurrected, along with the perennial suggestion that an independent element should look into police wrongdoing, is to break up the huge, unmanageable Metropolitan Police bureaucracy – adding in the City police before dividing the whole. But restructuring the force would make no significant difference to the endemic corruption. It didn't in 1975, when measures were taken to end CID pre-eminence – the assumed cause of all the corruption: in order to take promotion police officers had thereafter to move from CID to uniform branch, or vice versa. It caused upset and resentment at the time, but everyone soon adjusted to it when the 'business as usual' sign went up.

For the sake of convenience, police wrongdoing has been made synonymous with taking money from wrongdoers in return for ignoring their wrongdoing. There is a good deal of that, which in some ways is a conditioned response to general greed, but there is also a lot of corruption in other areas – 'fitting up' villains for other people's villainy, for instance. A frequent reaction to this practice is to say that 'if the police know that these people are crooks, they're fair game and deserve what they get.' The flaw in the argument is that police officers working in a competitive environment, where bodies mean promotion, sometimes allow the 'fittings' to slip over into the non-villain class. Conditioning makes identification more and more difficult – 'I mean, everyone's at it, aren't they? Everyone fiddles or is having something, even if it's only chummy's wife next door.'

Subtler strains of the same virus are to be found in those who enjoy the power the job gives them. It is the most enormous power over other individuals, and it is often vested in people with neither sufficient training nor strength of character to cope with it. Many start with good intentions and worthy qualities, which are doomed to perish in a system where each new recruit is raised under the wing of a more experienced officer. The new man all too often accepts or has thrust upon him the more experienced man's values, finding the peer-group identity which they represent hard to resist.

Therein lies the path upwards. For the officer, each promotion that comes along increases his power, giving him prestige and a belief in himself and the system he represents. With this comes a compulsion to test what he can get away with, and push back the perimeters. Of course there are consequences for officers who abuse their power, who fail to uphold the rule of law impartially. However, the victim often has to kick down the prison wall in order to be heard, or find a way to storm the near-impenetrable bureaucratic shield known as the procedure – run, not unexpectedly, by honourable, decent, fair-minded people who happen to be policemen.

Here another form of corruption is encountered: policemen who know other policemen who are 'at it' yet do nothing about it. They proliferate in the self-policing complaints system as everywhere else. The same rules apply: 'What you do to your brother officer you do to yourself.'

Politicians and senior policemen will continue to make noises about the police wanting, 'like everyone else', to see corruption stamped out. Inevitably our police are like us, and what we ask them to do and allow them to do is done in our name. They have the same needs and fears, and they reflect our values. Four pages ahead of Merlyn Rees's article in *The Times* was a full-page advert in the form of the annual report of the British Airports Authority, stating how profitable they are. The common is about to be stolen, and doubtless the perpetrator will be rewarded with a knighthood. The man caught stealing the goose from that common, or, more likely, a box of teabags from the cafeteria, would be severely punished. Then the arresting officers persuade the teabag thief, on the promise of help in court, to 'put his hand up' to all the other items that have gone missing in the airport over the past months. The thief puts his hand up. The police have a worthwhile result.

INTO THIS MORASS in 1978 – praise be to Merlyn Rees – came the Dorset police, with a brief they couldn't hope to fulfil. They were to investigate police corruption in London, using information supplied by supergrasses – well-placed villains with guns to their heads. The values of the Dorset police were little different from those of the officers they were to investigate. They were less pressured, Lyme Regis not being quite the hub of criminal activity that London is. They eventually returned home to find that their own force was being investigated for alleged wrongdoing; the investigation was conducted by the South Yorkshire police, who had themselves . . .

Gasps of surprise and cries of foul were heard when the policemen in London wouldn't cooperate with their inquisitors. But the Countryman people gritted their teeth and waded into the swamp; they got in deeper than was expected of them, started to thrash about and sank further. No one rushed to help them out. But for a few honourable exceptions no one wanted to believe that corruption could be as widespread as these shouts from the beast in the swamp indicated. By and large, again with honourable exceptions, the news media ignored the shouts as well. After all, our police are basically sound, the odd bad apple pops to the surface and is dealt with. When there's anything to be told, the press office of Scotland Yard will call a news conference.

However, repeatedly and persistently, away from the calls in the swamp, other noises of complaint were being made – not about police corruption, but about the way outside policemen were investigating it. These outsiders were listening to malicious tittle-tattle, in which the names of senior officers were mentioned in connection with robberies and reward money. The ranks were too high for the stories to be given credence. As most people know, corruption, *if* it exists, goes no higher than the rank of sergeant. . .

Senior policemen were concerned about the morale of their men. They complained

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to the DPP's deputies, the lawyers they dealt with in their daily routine of getting wrongdoers into court on the right charges and with enough evidence. Some had relationships going back a long way. Complaints about the Countryman investigation by senior London police became a continuous, monotonous whine. The deputies carried the message back to the DPP: 'This is not the way to investigate wrongdoing in the Met. London detectives are best equipped to look at their own wrongdoing. They will deal with it vigorously and ruthlessly.'

Finally the beast in the swamp was yanked out and put back on the train. This left the slight problem of how to restore surface tranquillity. Here the DPP's office was useful again. The criterion was to have enough evidence to hand to make conviction of corrupt police a banker's bet. Supergrasses alone uncorroborated wouldn't do – faith in them had suddenly diminished. A few charges were brought, but only of the wrist-slapping kind.

Chief Inspector Cuthbertson and his partner had their wrists smacked quite sharply with three years and two respectively – the maximum the judge could give them on the charges they went up on. This was lenient enough for them to do the decent thing and not drag others into the frame. Three years are actually two at the most, after remission, but it's a long time for a policeman to be 'banged up' with two other criminals – whom he'd possibly helped to put there – in a cell 13 feet by 8 feet for 23 hours a day with no sanitation.

But that's not the sort of sentence Cuthbertson will have. Instead it will be an open prison, with a relaxed regime and occasional conjugal visits. That's reasonably civilised, but it is denied to most prisoners. Corruption doesn't only pervade the police. 'I mean, everyone's at it.'

Whose little piggies will be cold next winter?

Tony Harpur

WHILE ATTENTION has been concentrated on Countryman an equally sinister yet less readily recognised element has steadily been gaining ground – the thug element, which is quietly alarming senior officers. It has always been present, but now it's slipping out of control; that growing band of young policemen who would sooner put the boot in than 'nick' anyone. However, arrests do have to be made in order to justify the kicking: 'So, if you can nick a tint . . .' Some members of the Association of Chief Police Officers are alarmed, less at what this element does than at the fact that it's out of control. It doesn't respond to discipline, for that can only be effective when applied to individuals. These lads come into their own in riots, or at anti-establishment demos: 'One thing you can be sure of, no matter how dangerous the situation, our young policemen acquit themselves honourably.'

The problem of police corruption and wrongdoing is only just beginning to be acknowledged. There is a long way to go before the *extent* of the corruption is also recognised. More severe punishment – Cuthbertson doing 30 years instead of three – isn't the answer, not even for those who put their trust in deterrence. Better procedures for internal investigation, with independent elements, or all-party parliamentary committees, or even a panel of investigative journalists, would only promote more finely-honed corruption. Moreover, it *is* outrageous that the police are placed in double jeopardy: if a policeman is prosecuted for wrongdoing and found not guilty, the police disciplinary board often still takes action against the officer. Police officers baulk at what they see as a double standard. It's yet another reason for resisting any urge they may have felt to sort out wrongdoing by colleagues.

It is naive to set aside one body of people, show them the rules and ask them to police the rest, who seem intent on breaking those rules, and still to expect the first lot of people not to break them too. Why do people want to place themselves in the first category? To expect any single body of people to remain distanced and to police their fellows without succumbing to the values of the market-place is impractical.

Like the population in general, all policemen aren't corrupt all of the time; but the area they work in of necessity lends itself to opportunism and abuse. There is little point in designing a system within the police department that can do nothing other than treat the effect and then feel cheated because it's not dealing with the cause. The chance of the cause ever being dealt with remains slim, because to acknowledge it means that people at the top will have to admit that we have a very corrupt police force in this country. □

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POLITICS

Black marks in the margin

Will real power continue to elude Britain's new black councillors? ZAREER MASANI reports on their experience since the May elections

ONE OF THE FEW items to go through on the nod at the National Executive Committee's marathon session on 28 July was a proposed national conference of black Labour councillors this autumn as part of Labour's 'Black Electorate' campaign.

The campaign, launched in February 1980, has so far produced little more than an 'Advice Note' from the NEC to regional parties, urging efforts to eliminate institutionalised racism within the party and make it more responsive to ethnic minorities. But such advice has largely been ignored at regional level and black activists are increasingly cynical about the political will of the national leadership. There is a near unanimous view among black Labour councillors, whether on the left or right of the party, that there will be no change until blacks, like women, organise an effective pressure-group of their own within the party.

The proposed conference of black councillors has already met with some resistance from the Labour establishment. According to Cllr Phil Sealy (Brent), when the idea was mooted by a group of black councillors, some white NEC members objected to the proposal that the major part of the conference should be for black participants, with the NEC's presence limited to the final session. But Cllr Russell Profitt (Lewisham), who has been co-ordinating the proposal, is adamant that control of the conference and its agenda must remain firmly in black hands.

Among black councillors, there is general agreement that the conference should be merely a first step towards a broadly based black caucus, embracing all black Labour activists. 'What we need,' says James Hunte, the only West Indian county councillor in the West Midlands, 'is not a one-off conference, but regular, rotating meetings all over the country. When we organised a black Labour conference in Birmingham earlier this year, Michael Foot didn't even bother to reply to our invitation.'

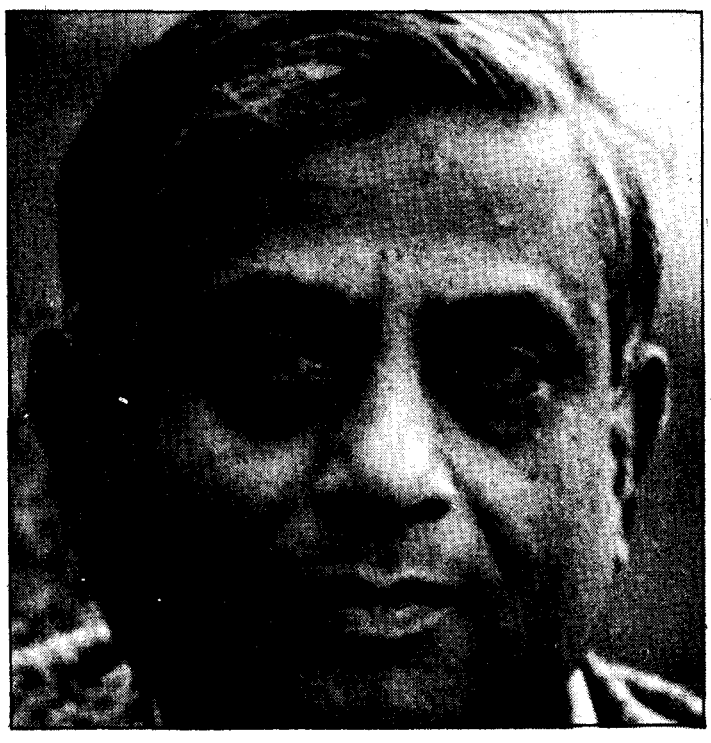
Over the last two years, a growing number of black councillors have been elected in West Yorkshire and the Midlands; but their presence has yet to be reflected in the local power-structures and in policy-making committees. Only in London has black participation even begun to break the traditional mould of white-dominated town halls. If representation accurately reflected the population, ethnic minorities ought to have 14 GLC councillors and 272 borough councillors in London. While the elections last May did not see the return of anything like that proportion of blacks, the election of 77 ethnic minority councillors in the London boroughs, compared with 41 in the outgoing councils, was an improvement. Sixty-nine of these were elected for Labour; and polling figures in some wards indicate that black candidates increased Labour's vote by bringing out new black voters.

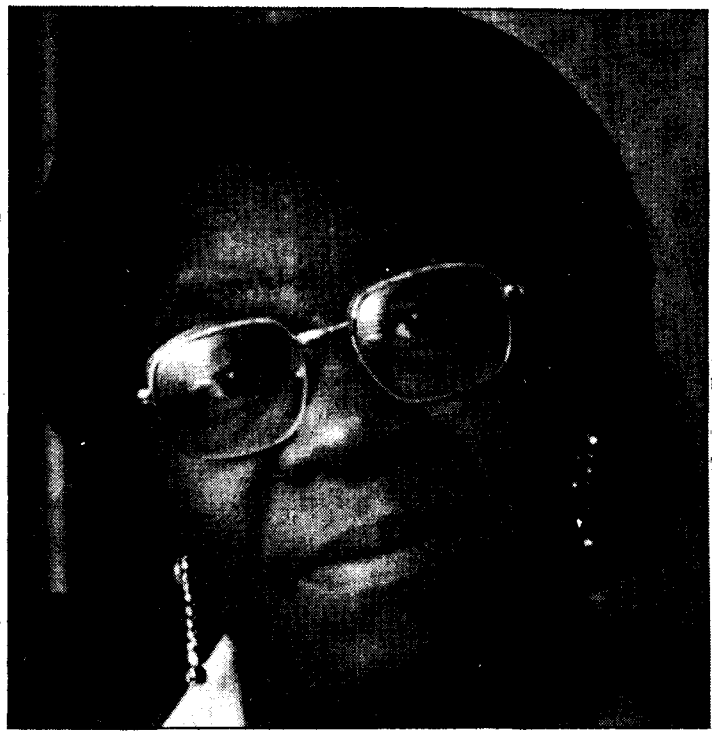
Fourteen black councillors were returned in the borough of Brent alone, long regarded as a model of multi-racial local government. But Brent's black councillors point out that their success is the result of many years of hard work, in the face of fierce resistance from both local Tories and the Labour right-wing, and that the struggle is far from over. Starting with a black voter registration campaign in the mid-1970s, informal Asian and West Indian caucuses have worked systematically to enrol black members to the Labour Party and to get them elected to party and council committees. The present Labour administration in Brent has a black Deputy Leader, Merle Amory, and a black Chair, Phil Sealy, for its Finance Committee. Eight other black councillors also hold office as chairs and vice-chairs of other committees. Nevertheless, right-wing resistance to this process remains strong. Two prominent, black left-wingers, Manibhai Patel and Ambrozine Neil, both selected by Labour's Local Government Committee for committee chairs, found their election blocked by last-minute deals in the Labour Group.

Some other London boroughs also offer a sprinkling of black front-benchers – Bernie Grant (Deputy Leader of Haringey), Patrick Kodikara (Chair of Hackney's Social Services), Russell Profitt (Vice-Chair of Policy & Resources Committee in Lewisham), Janet Boateng (shadow-chair of Lambeth's Social Services) and Diane Abbott (shadow-chair of Westminster's General Purposes Committee). But there are also glaring exceptions like Tower Hamlets and Ealing, whose large Asian communities remain effectively unrepresented in local policy-making. Ealing has seven Asian councillors, all from Labour wards in Southall, but the local Labour Group has yet to elect a single Asian front-bench spokesperson.

MOST BLACKS elected to positions of authority by predominantly, if not exclusively, white Labour parties remain acutely conscious of the patronising tokenism implicit in such representation. Merle Amory, explaining her rapid rise to deputy leadership in Brent, makes no bones about the fact that, as a young, black woman (she is 24), she was chosen for her image rather than as a serious politician. But she sees

Manibhai Patel (left) and Ambrozine Neil (right), local black councillors whose election to committee chairs was blocked by last-minute Labour Group deals





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her position as a base for promoting the black community projects with which she is involved and as an opportunity to demonstrate to the local bureaucracy and other councillors that she has a political mind of her own. Janet Boateng, Lambeth's first black woman councillor, thinks much the same. But her position on Social Services means that for the first time in years black demands on Council services are being pressed by a black voice within Lambeth Town Hall.

Underlying the question of black participation in 'mainstream' politics is the real alienation which grassroots, black activists feel from the white, middle-class values and structures of local government and the Labour Party. For many, there is a major dilemma between attempting to play 'the white political game', and thereby risking becoming replicas of white politicians and bureaucrats, or boycotting white institutions and organising along separatist lines. The few who have attempted to carry community-based campaigns into the council chamber without compromising them have inevitably run into major conflicts.

Councillor Ambrozine Neil in Brent is a case in point. A middle-aged, West Indian single parent with six children, she represents the gut anger and disillusionment of working-class, black parents with an educational system which condemns black children to 'under-achievement' and 'sin-bins' and denies their parents a say in school management. Originating in 1978 in her own battle with a local school over her son's suspension, the Parents' Association for Educational Advance (PAEA), which she leads, now claims an active membership of 160 and has fought many other cases of discrimination by schools.

Not surprisingly, Mrs Neil's frank speaking and radical demands have won her powerful enemies in the Town Hall, who have succeeded for the last three years in blocking PAEA's applications for grant aid to employ a worker. A recent meeting of the Council's Finance Committee, at which the application came up, had to be adjourned when personal smears against Mrs Neil by the Tories, condoned by Labour right-wingers, provoked stormy protests from the public gallery. Within the Labour Group, the right-wing also managed to block her election as Vice-Chair of the Council's Education Committee, even though she was the unanimous choice of the Labour Local Government Committee and all three constituency Labour parties.

According to black Labour leaders like Bernie Grant, Merle Amory and Patrick Kodikara, what the party needs is a three-tier programme of black involvement: organisational affiliation of independent, black groups outside; a black section within as an internal training-ground and pressure-group, like the women's section and the Young Socialists; and more active individual participation in 'mainstream' Labour politics, based on black membership enrolment at ward level. In the Midlands, the Asian Labour Party Alliance (ALPA), which is trying to link Labour politics with the independent Asian youth movement, also believes that constitutional changes to allow organisational affiliation are essential if the party wants to work with younger activists. □

TRANSPORT

Road lobby closes in on London

MICK HAMER explains why a new House of Commons plan is bad news for public transport and good news for car commuters

LONDON'S bus and tube fares are the most expensive in the world. Its bus service is among the worst. MPs have responded to this crisis by proposing to take London Transport away from the Greater London Council and give it to a new body. The government sympathises with the MPs' views. But the plans will do little to help public transport. Instead they are a major victory for the road lobby. They mean more road building and more juggernauts thundering through the city streets.

The House of Commons' transport committee, which reported at the end of July, recommend setting up a new Metropolitan Transport Authority (MTA). This body would take over the control of all main roads and of London Transport. It would cover an area stretching from Hitchin in the north to Crawley in the south, from Slough in the west to an eastern outpost of Gravesend: precisely the area London Transport covered when it was set up in 1933.

The MTA would be charged with carrying out two ten-year action programmes, one for public transport and one for roads. Yet it is the road action programme which has real substance, while the public transport action programme is mere window-dressing.

In recent years the GLC has cut its road-building plans. In 1973 the new Labour GLC dropped Ringway One. In 1981 even the Tory administration was forced to reduce its plans because of government cuts in local authority spending. And after last year's Labour victory the GLC dropped a number of major roads, including the controversial West London Relief Road, which would pass through Earls Court. The MPs say, disapprovingly, that the GLC has been 'susceptible . . . to significant shifts in its road building policies as a result of changes in political control.' So the MPs want to take responsibility for main roads away from the GLC.

The MPs on the Transport Committee want the funding now provided by the Government for building the M25 (the road around London) to be continued for the purpose of building roads in London as the M25 is completed. The GLC is now spending about £30 million annually on new roads. (A mile of dual carriageway in central London can easily cost £10 million or more.) Although the MPs do not specify a figure, if the government accepts these plans then spending on new roads in London would probably rise to about £100 million a year. Among the roads which the MPs favour building are a replacement for the South Circular Road and the West London Relief Road.

The public transport action programme is much more modest. Both British Rail and London Transport need to modernise their railways. The MPs propose an extra 20 per cent for public transport investment – enough to jazz up a few more stations and replace some of the older trains. But it is not enough to build any new tube lines, or finance the expansion of existing services.

The pro-road bias in these programmes would be reinforced by the political complexion of an MTA. The MTA members would be selected, not elected. The Transport Committee envisages half being appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport and the rest by local authorities in the area, including the GLC and other councils. Outside London the overwhelming majority of councils in the area are Tory-controlled. However the appointments were divided between councils, the majority of local authority appointees would be Conservatives. Many Tories have a deep-seated distaste for public transport – as car owners they are much keener on road building. The clash comes in central London, where fewer residents own cars, yet where the roads are clogged by commuters. Many of the roads that the MPs on the Transport Committee want built are in Labour areas; they will chiefly benefit people driving in from Tory areas.

Yet even for Tories the plan has its drawbacks. The MTA will be financed through the rates, adding its precept to the local council's rates. This is bound to mean a large rate increase for ratepayers who are outside the GLC border but within the larger MTA net. If transport secretary David Howell rejects the plan, it will be because he fears the political backlash of large rate rises in the London commuter belt, which has a number of marginal seats.

THE TRANSPORT Committee has ducked the question of fares in London: 'The level of public transport fares should be in the end a matter for political judgment for which the political authorities concerned should be answerable directly to the electorate.' It has also tried to stifle the GLC's attempts to have a ban on juggernauts in London. When it took office last year the Labour GLC set up an inquiry into banning lorries in London. The inquiry, under Derek Wood QC, is considering a number of possible lorry bans, including a night-time ban. The road freight industry has been vociferously against any ban at all, although bans are common in many other cities throughout the world. The Committee recommends that 'the government . . . should not support any measures proposed by the GLC to prevent the movement of heavy goods vehicles, or particularly classes of heavy goods vehicles, in the GLC area as a whole.'

The Committee's report reads remarkably like the transport plans for London that were produced in the 1960s – more roads, and a few sops for public transport. Half the journeys in London are made on

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foot or by bicycle. Neither these travellers, nor those on motorbikes, get even a token mention in the MPs' report.

Every working morning a million passengers pour into central London. Only 15 per cent of them come by car. And they're the ones who clog up the roads. Yet roads already occupy a quarter of the land in central London. New roads sterilise valuable land, but at the same time cannot unblock the traffic jams because another half a million or so who now travel by public transport also have cars. New roads would just allow more of these hidden drivers to drive to work. Even with the old 1970s ringways not all those who wanted to drive to work could have, there wouldn't be the space.

The increase in driving is the single most important reason for the decline in London's bus services. Thirty years ago London Transport had 10,200 buses. It now has 6,400. Paris, by contrast, has since 1973 nearly doubled the number of people using buses by having a cheap fares policy. It has also built a number of new railway lines, its investment budget being three times that of London Transport.

GLC leader Ken Livingstone attacked the Transport Committee's report, saying that it 'could have been drafted by the roads lobby'. One of the leading lights on the transport committee is Tory MP Peter Fry. Fry is a very active and attentive committee member. Out of 14 amendments that were proposed in the drafting of the report Fry made eight on his own (mostly aimed at preventing any effective enforcement of parking regulations in London). Peter Fry is the Conservative chairman of the All Party Roads Study Group – a Parliamentary organisation run by the British Road Federation. The British Road Federation, one of the more prominent members of the road lobby, has 'commended' the Transport Committee for its report. □

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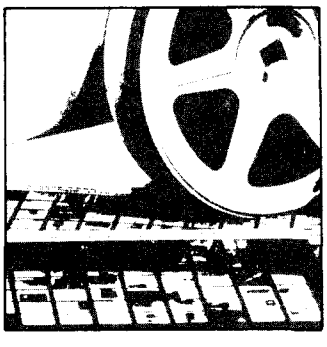

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JUSTICE

Establishment cover-up

NICHOLAS FAIRBAIRN, the former Solicitor-General for Scotland, was Paddy Meehan's barrister at his trial in 1969 and conducted his appeal. He finds Lord Hunter's judicial review of the case, published last week, wholly unconvincing

TWO MEN broke into the house of Mr and Mrs Ross in Racecourse Road, Ayr, in the early hours of Sunday, 6 July 1969. They overwhelmed the aged couple by force, tied them up and demanded the keys of the safe, which they knew that Mr Ross as a bingo hall owner had in the house. They robbed Ross of the money in his trousers and stole the money in his safe. They stayed for several hours till it was light and left, promising to send an ambulance.

They did not and Mrs Ross, an old, frail woman, died later in hospital of her injuries. Ross was found, still tied up on Monday morning by their daily cleaning lady. A major murder hunt ensued. The murder was in fact committed by Ian Waddell and 'Tank' McGuinness, who was interviewed by two police officers outside the house at the time, as we shall see; but that report was suppressed by the investigating officers, despite requests by the defence to confirm it. Ross said that the men referred to one another as Pat and Jimmy.

Paddy Meehan and Jim Griffiths were car thieves and on this evening were engaged in a variety of petty criminal enterprises in Stranraer. Their route home took them necessarily through Ayr and past Prestwick Airport, which was then – and may be still – a place where beaux and belles went for coffee in the hope of cross-matching. Two girls and two boys set off back from Prestwick and stopped in a layby – one of the girls got out of the car in protest at the advances of her new acquaintance, who drove off with her girlfriend still aboard. She flagged down Meehan and Griffiths, who overtook the offending car and took her and her friend home before returning to their own homes in Glasgow. It was not yet light.

On reading of the Ayr murder, Paddy Meehan at first anonymously advised the police of the two young rascals from whom they had rescued a damsel in distress and then, having nothing to fear, went at their behest to the police. He told them that he (Paddy) had been with (Jim) Griffiths in Stranraer and of all the events of the night. It was too good to be true: Pat and Jim – it must be them. Parade them.

But Ross had said that during the robbery his head had always been covered by a blanket, so he couldn't identify his attackers. He had only heard them speak 13 words. How could the police obtain a positive identification without which there could be no arrest? The ruse they adopted was simple. As always, all the witnesses were assembled in one room. In the Southern Police office in Glasgow, the Assembly Room (1) leads into the Identification Parade Room (2) and then to the Receiving Room (3). You cannot go from (1) to (3) without going through (2). On this occasion, Room (1) was allegedly being painted (which it wasn't), so the witnesses were assembled in the Detective Constables' Room, from which you can go to Room (3) without going through Room (2), the Parade Room.

Ross was taken out first, giving the impression to the other witnesses that he was viewing the parade, but he was in fact taken to Room (3). All the witnesses, including the girls, then viewed the parade, identified Meehan whom they knew or had seen for some time and entered Room (3), where Ross asked them about Meehan's characteristics – he was, for example, the only one on parade wearing a suit. He then – last – viewed the parade and identified by voice on these words 'Shut up, shut up, we'll send an ambulance'.

Meehan was arrested and charged. He immediately gave the police Griffiths' address – who after all could confirm his alibi. Griffiths resisted his attempted arrest and shot his way out, wounding 13 people – one fatally. The police shot him dead. His actions confirmed to the police their conviction that Meehan and Griffiths were Pat and Jim, but there was no *evidence* at all except the bogus identity parade. Police experts found nothing – even in Griffiths' clothes. Time passed and then, miraculously, in Griffiths' winter coat, in the pocket of which Detective Constable Simpson who examined it first found nothing, were conveniently later found two tiny slivers of paper which matched paper in Ross's safe. The forensic officers who first examined the safe also originally said they found nothing. Not 'nothing but paper', but 'nothing'. The paper matched – despite the fact (as one would expect in June), that Ross had said that neither raider wore a coat.

The trial was acrimonious and bitter. The judge was plainly in no doubt of the correct verdict. Griffiths' previous record and actions – which would not have been allowed as evidence had he been alive – were laid before the jury. Meehan was convicted by 9-6. During the trial, when it was first suggested Ross was the first to view the identity parade, Meehan told me instantly that Ross was not first but last on the parade. That was confirmed after the appeal when all those standing in the identity parade and the solicitors present were questioned about it – but at the trial the order of the parade seemed of no import.

MEEHAN LODGED a special defence of incrimination, naming Ian Waddell and a man, Phillips, who in fact had nothing to

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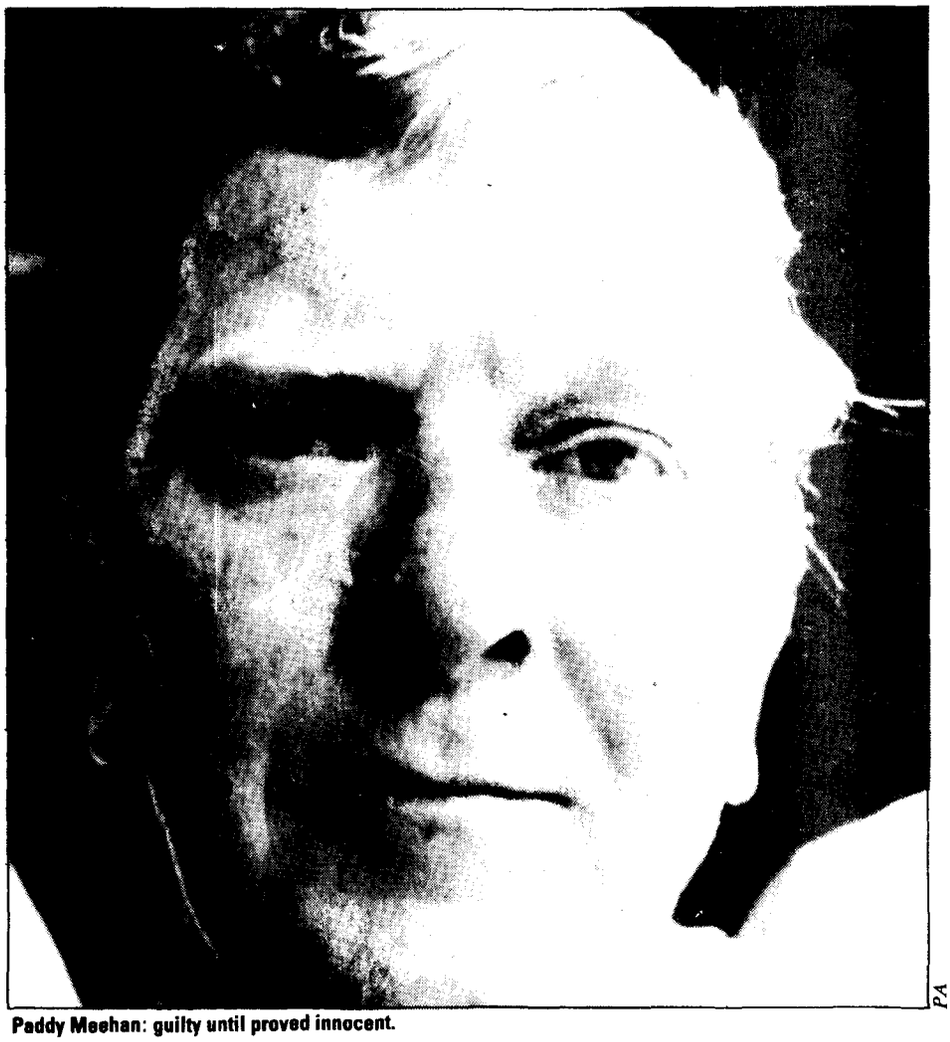

PA

Paddy Meehan: guilty until proved innocent.

do with it, as the perpetrators. That defence was withdrawn from the jury by the trial judge, but not before Waddell had given evidence. An unemployed labourer, he had gone the day after the parade to a Glasgow solicitor, Mr Carlin, to give him £500 in ten pound notes (similar to those stolen) and asked him to go with him if the police came for him about the 'Ayr thing'. Waddell denied this at the trial and subsequently received three years for perjury.

Before the trial, Meehan had petitioned the High Court to be allowed to be examined by detective officers under the 'truth drug'. The High Court held that such evidence would be incompetent. At his trial Meehan reminded the Court of his earlier offer. The trial judge asked: 'Can't you tell the truth without the truth drug?' When Waddell emerged from prison he again offered to make a full confession under the truth drug, which he believed would give immunity to his admissions. He was interviewed by various journalists, who secretly recorded his admissions. These were published and sent to the Lord Advocate, the chief Law Officer in Scotland. When the authorities took no action, Waddell became bolder and gave numerous interviews, including a television interview. In total he gave over 50 details of the kind which could only have been known to the raider. He refused however, to name his accomplice.

At every stage the authorities resisted and clung to their faith in Meehan's guilt. It was not until Meehan had served seven years of his sentence that McGuinness himself was murdered. The truth of his involvement in the 'Meehan' case was then revealed by his family and his lawyer. Meehan was immediately granted a Royal Pardon and rightly freed. But the Edinburgh establishment insisted that he had been 'wrongly freed' and proceeded to say so. At Waddell's own trial for the same murder, the presiding judge held that, so far as his view of Scottish law was concerned, Meehan could only have been 'pardoned' for something he'd done. Therefore, Waddell couldn't be builty as well as Meehan. Waddell was acquitted.

Waddell's trial followed an investigation by two senior detectives, Assistant Chief Constable Arthur Bell and Detective Superintendent John McDougall. They discovered the suppressed evidence of McGuinness's original presence outside the Ross house, when he had been interviewed by two policemen and observed by a neighbour. With regard to the paper in Griffiths' car coat, Detective Superintendent McDougall reported to Lord Hunter's subsequent enquiry: 'There is no use beating about the bush, I think it was planted, there is no other explanation.'

After Waddell's trial, the Secretary of State for Scotland set up an enquiry under the meticulous Scots judge, Lord Hunter. He was specifically forbidden in his terms of reference even to consider the question of Meehan's guilt or innocence. Five years and a third of a million pounds later, in flat contempt of Parliament's instruction, Lord Hunter in effect found Meehan guilty of the crime in respect of which he had been pardoned – or as Lord Hunter puts it: 'It is therefore considered that the theory of possible involvement of Meehan and Griffiths has not been disproved either by clear and convincing information or on a balance of probabilities' . . . 'Nor in particular is the available information considered to justify a conclusion that they were neither at the locus nor handled any of the proceeds of the crime.'

Those conclusions are in contempt of Parliament's remit, contrary to the presumption of innocence and the standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt, which the judge piously set himself at the outset. They are supported by no evidence or even by a suggestion as to the manner of possible involvement.

HOW DOES Lord Hunter come to these conclusions? He postulates without evidence that two men were too few for such a 'job' and that, while Waddell and McGuinness were the attackers, it must have been a four-man job. So Waddell and McGuiness were the 'other two', waiting in the wings to blow the Ross safe: but the householder had the key so they were never required. In that way Lord Hunter flatly contradicts the whole premise of the prosecution case in the Meehan and McGuinness trial – namely that only two men were involved: and all the claims of Waddell and McGuinness that they did it alone. Hunter rejects the inevitable consequent conclusion that the identity parade was rigged and, as Detective Superintendent John McDougall found, that the key 'paper' was planted. He finds it 'improbable' that the investigating police (though he brands those in charge as dishonest, incompetent, and untrustworthy) 'would plant' evidence. Well what sort of policemen would, if they wouldn't? Honest ones?

And Lord Hunter gives as his reason: 'If planting of evidence is *established* or suspected in a single case, it will almost certainly be alleged or assumed in some quarters that planting of evidence takes place in many cases'. In other words, although the paper was undoubtedly planted in this case, better deny it, or find a made theory which prevents you from having to admit it, than that planting ever should be admitted to have occurred. If that is the attitude of High Court judges to the planting of evidence, then police officers can presumably now plant with immunity.

But what of truth and justice? Does that not suggest that all the conclusions of the 'four-man theory' for this murder were concocted (from nothing and no evidence) in order to deny the planting which resulted in Meehan's wrongful conviction? Partly. But there is another motive. Meehan is a clear 'baddy'. The Crown and the Establishment are clear 'goodies'. Baddies can't be goodies and goodies can't be baddies. If Meehan wasn't Hamlet, he must at least have been involved in the play somehow – even as prompter perhaps – but involved. It seems impossible for a High Court judge to believe that a wrongful conviction could have taken place, if it was upheld at appeal. In Meehan's case, in all the various processes, thirteen different High Court judges have rejected his claims of innocence. Now a fourteenth tries to brand him with a whiff of guilt and sin. May *he* be pardoned – in Lord Robertson's words – for what he has wrongly done. □

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NHS DISPUTE—1

Action for a fair deal

Can the hospital unions get proper long-term pay arrangements out of this government? PATRICK WINTOUR reviews the strike's changing aims

ON MONDAY the pickets were assembling for the start of the TUC's five days of action in the Health Service. Norman Fowler, the Health Minister, was flitting from TV studio to TV studio, vowing 'no surrender'. On the same day, half a dozen union leaders were meeting for discussions that may hold the eventual key to better industrial relations in the NHS.

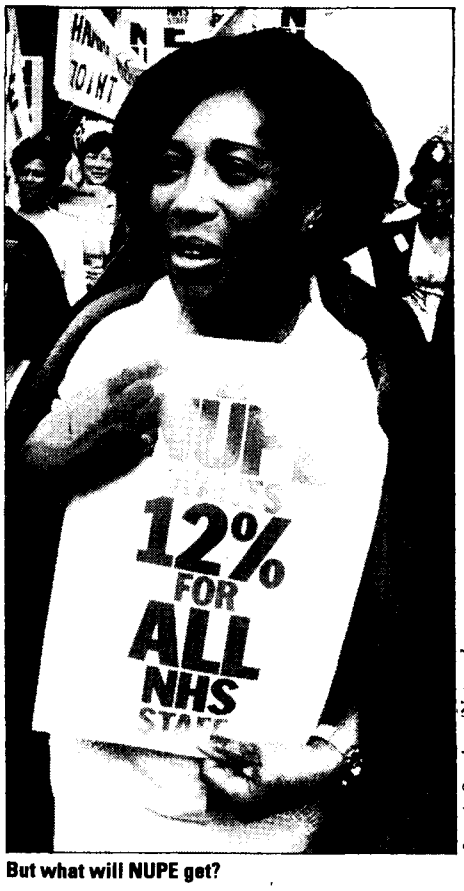
The union leaders were discussing their response to the government's proposals for a new long-term pay arrangement for nurses. Fowler – who is still ruling out arbitration for this year's pay round – wants a new system of pay settlement in place by next April. But any arrangement for the country's 460,000 nurses could also apply to other NHS workers such as the 270,000 ancillaries and 120,000 clericals.

So far such discussions have been painfully slow to start. In the wake of their decision to abandon the Clegg Comparability Commission, Tory Ministers in August 1980 wrote to the unions suggesting negotiations on a long-term arrangement for nurses' pay. Since then neither side has been eager to talk – the government because it had no coherent pay policy for the public sector and the unions because the government would give no prior commitment about low pay.

Since the publication last month of the Megaw Report into Civil Service pay, a framework for discussion of public sector pay has been at least drawn up. Megaw specifically looked at Civil Service pay, but it was generally recognised by the government that many of its proposals for arbitration and new systems of researching pay, comparability and affordability were applicable to other public sector workers. At the same time the nursing unions decided, regardless of their doubts about the government's seriousness, that they could no longer veto such discussions – the government would make too much political capital out of their refusal to talk about the long term.

In the second week of June the discussions on nurses' pay finally began. Since then there have been two further meetings with unions, management and government all present. A further meeting has been set for 2 September. The government persistently claims the talks are making good progress and that this is one more valid reason for the strikes to be called off.

Both nursing union leaders, Bob Jones of the National Union of Public Employees and David Williams of COHSE, deny that negotiations have been successful. Both say there is wide philosophical gap between the unions and the government. The government wants to develop points of comparison or a collection of other analagous jobs with which to measure the right annual *movement* of nurses' pay. The unions want comparisons which first of all look at whether nurses are paid at a fair and just absolute *level* and then go on to gauge fair year-on-year increases. Without the initial evaluation of nurses' overall value, the unions fear, nurses will be locked permanently into low pay.



Laurie Sparham/Network

But what will NUPE get?

EVEN if this initial obstacle were avoided, the unions are simply casting around for outside jobs which have similar elements to nurses, including age of entry, academic requirements, length of training, the need to provide a 24-hour service, the professional accountability of qualified nurses and the responsible nature of many nurses' decisions. After that must come further tripartite talks about who can have access to the annual raw pay research material, who decides what the government can afford and what role will be left for the current statutory negotiating body in the health service, the Whitley Councils. Finally, agreement on a comparability method does not settle whether its findings would be binding on both sides. Clearly, these negotiations could run and run.

However, there does seem to be on the unions' side – partly because of Megaw and partly because of the effects of the health service strike – a growing seriousness about finding a fair comparability system for the public sector. The TUC Public Services Committee are going to prepare alternative proposals to Megaw in the autumn and the issue will be at the centre of debates at TUC Congress.

Indeed, it is not too fanciful to say that the strike, at least in the eyes of many union leaders, is now as much about the method of determining future years' pay as the size of this year's offer. Union leaders and local stewards privately admit there is little prospect of winning the full 12 per cent claim without a major switch in tactics to all-out strike with emergency cover.

The best hope of an increased offer lies with the non-TUC affiliated Royal College of Nursing which represents 190,000 nurses. The RCN has put the government's a vote. A previous ballot on 6 per cent was massively rejected by the nurses against the leadership's expectations. With the tipsters' fingers burnt once, no-one is forecasting the result of the second ballot – due on 26 August – with any confidence.

But three factors suggest they will reject the improved offer. First, Mr Fowler's adverts, designed to show how well everyone would do, were so obviously misleading that it turned into £86,000-worth of propaganda for the rejectionists. In Leeds, for instance, some wry nurses put in claims to local management for back-pay based on the figures claimed in the DHSS adverts. Secondly, the announcement of a 10 per cent pay increase for the police blew apart Mr Fowler's point that 6-7 per cent was the going rate. Finally, the five days of action were decently supported this week. If RCN members had seen that the strike was losing support they doubtless would have been influenced in their vote. As one Sheffield NUPE steward told me: 'This week was as much to influence the RCN as the government'.

MR FOWLER'S use and abuse of the phrase 'Final Offer' is already a linguistic milestone. If the RCN rejects the offer, he will almost certainly have to improve it yet again – probably to 8 per cent though he can dress it up in one of four ways. He can simply find some more money in an overlooked corner of his previously bare contingency cupboard. He can cut the service and transfer funds to the wages account – something he has done twice this year before, when making improved offers. He could agree to go to arbitration – something the government has already done this year in two settlements that Fowler often cites, those for the teachers and civil servants. Finally, he could make some real commitment about long-term pay arrangements and low pay in the NHS.

If the RCN accepts, Mr Fowler, with one bound, will be free and the TUC will be left to desultory recrimination. Already reserves of energy and money are beginning to run out for NHS activists. Anyone who has been out on all 12 of the TUC's days of action will have lost over £150 – a good deal more than they will win from any improved offer. Some local leaders have been running the pay campaign since March and are exhausted. The process of raising the temperature only to have to let it drop for another fortnight until the next day of action is particularly debilitating.

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COHSE left-wingers, such as Peter Haworth, an Oxford branch chairman, say it is increasingly difficult to get members out and that many have lost faith in days of action. The same disillusionment has set in through parts of Yorkshire and Scotland.

Many on the Left feel that the critical error was made by the TUC Health Services Committee when they decided against all-out indefinite action after 23 June, but instead delayed the next action until the third week of July. By then much of the sympathy action and momentum, particularly in Scotland, had been dissipated. Some of the militants' disgust was reflected in a walk-out by Sheffield strikers attending a rally in the City Hall on 20 July addressed by Albert Spanswick, chairman of the TUC Health Services Committee.

Mr Spanswick is not the most glittering speaker at the best of times – low-key would be a polite description. However, the negative tone of his speech and remarks – such as 'some strikes do fail' – left him with an audience of little over 100 by the end, out of an original 3,000. In Mr Spanswick's defence, it needs to be said that his persistent refusal to countenance an all-out strike was in line with his union's conference policy. Similarly, only about eight of his 26-strong executive would support such a tactic. Meeting on Wednesday, the executive had no motion before it to step up the action. The problem for the unions is that all-out action would, under their rules, involve paying strike pay. Both COHSE and NUPE would be bankrupted within months. □

NHS DISPUTE—2

Code bound

KEN FERGUSON shows how the strike is hampered in Manchester

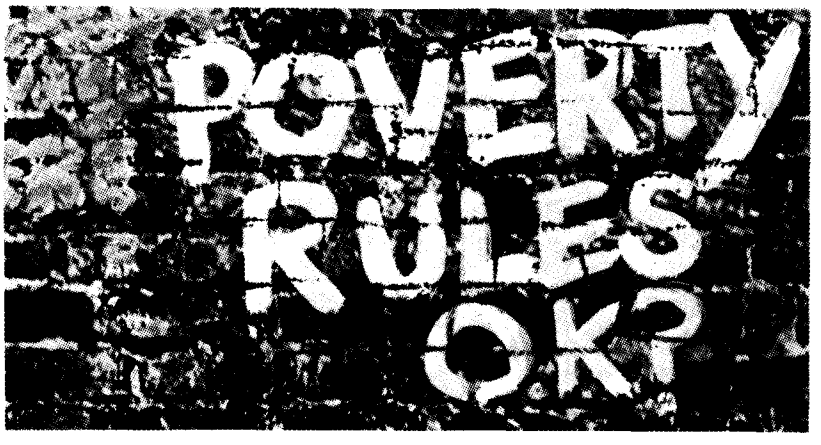
AS THE Health Service dispute heads for its fourth month, there are growing signs that the liberal, if well-intentioned nature of the TUC's code of conduct covering industrial action in the NHS is hampering the effectiveness of the workers' pay battle. The problem stems from the loose terms in which the code was drawn up last year by the TUC Health Services Committee, leaving the wide areas of interpretation open for debate at local level. In the Manchester area, for example, one union official claimed that the operation of the code could actually lead to a reduction in the length of some waiting lists.

The code states that children are to be regarded as 'high dependency patients' in the same category as the elderly or severely mentally handicapped. According to Mr Leo Tarpey, NALGO regional officer for the NHS, the code has led to children being treated where adults have not and this artificially reduces waiting lists. However Mr Tarpey made it clear that in his view there was absolutely no prospect of the code being abandoned or broken in any way.

The code works in three ways to reduce the severity of industrial action.

- First, it restricts the grades of members who can be brought into the dispute, often ruling out those who possess most industrial muscle. Technicians who service and maintain kidney machines are an 'emergency' service, according to the code. Thus, when last week 15 technicians at Manchester Royal Infirmary voted in their ballot to strike, the fact that some of their number worked on kidney machines blocked the process. Their demand to join the industrial action is still under consideration by their union.
- Second, the code inevitably brings pressure to bear on staff from administrators who are naturally anxious to keep hospitals running. Again, the wording of the code is so vague that they can invoke it as a means of keeping a wide range of services functioning. Workers at the sterile supplies unit in Trafford, Manchester, have been on indefinite strike for some time but are still going in daily under the code to deal with emergencies.
- The third source of pressure comes from the media, which has been only too willing to use the code as a stick with which to beat the strikers, claiming that shop stewards are taking medical decisions of a life-and-death nature. The unions contest this and assert that in Manchester regular, in many cases, daily meetings with management are taking place at which such issues are discussed, and that decisions are being taken on a medical basis.

Many hospitals have also set up joint union-management monitoring committees for the duration of the dispute. □



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Genius of the stupid move

President Reagan has the means to crack down on Israel, but dare not use any of them. CLAUDIA WRIGHT reports from Washington

'THE GENIUS of you Americans', President Nasser told an American adviser in the mid-1950s, 'is that you never make clear-cut stupid moves, only *complicated* stupid moves which make us wonder at the possibility that there may be something to them we are missing.'

That was in the days of Eisenhower and Dulles. These days of Reagan, Shultz and Clark, the National Security Adviser, leave little room for complexity or ambiguity. Nasser would not have been in any doubt, and no-one else should be, regarding the American performance over Lebanon in the past fortnight.

There was the Presidential glare staged for the Israeli Foreign Minister's visit to the White House on 2 August. That trick came straight from Mr Reagan's experience in television commercials. To make the point that 'the President is cracking down on Israel', a special briefing was given to the press corps to note the comparison between pursed Presidential lips this time, and the expansive smile made available on Mr Shamir's last visit.

Then there has been Mr Clark's trick of encouraging Arab officials to look for paragraphs in the weekly news magazines for the tipoff that the Administration is making a 'comprehensive reassessment' of its policy on the Middle East, while he assures the Israeli ambassador, Israel's lobbyists and the daily newspapers that this is totally false.

There is a minor bureaucratic difference among members of the Administration over the pros and cons of Yasser Arafat's corpse. There are those who would like to preserve the PLO chairman militarily and politically moribund but physically alive, and those who would prefer to bury him promptly where he is. But neither faction has any intention of conceding a Palestinian state in the face of Israel's opposition. Therefore the more Arafat has made concessions for talks between the PLO and Washington, the more uncomfortable the Administration has grown. It would have been as pleased as General Sharon had the bomb attack on a Beirut apartment block on 6 August resulted in the deaths of Arafat and his staff, as the Israelis intended. The President isn't squeamish about that kind of bloodshed. He doesn't want on his hands the blood of the 200 or so people who were in the apartment building at the time instead of Arafat.

Since the basic American and Israeli objectives remain the same in Beirut, and there is ample political support in Washington and Jerusalem for the methods employed, it is a charade for the White House to claim it can't control Prime Minister Begin, and for Begin to claim he can't control General Sharon. But even if the Administration felt more strongly about appearing to control Israel – as John Foster Dulles said in 1957, 'We cannot have all our policies made in Jerusalem' – no-one in the White House knows how to play a successful game of bluff. President Eisenhower felt more strongly on this point, and threatened tougher sanctions than have been proposed before or since, but he wasn't prepared to root Israel from the Gaza Strip.

PRIVATELY the White House is saying it doesn't want to threaten sanctions now, to save West Beirut and the PLO, because it may need the sanctions later on to get Israel out of Lebanon and to win concessions on Palestinian autonomy. But that is plain deception. Even if the Administration wanted to cut off arms deliveries, it knows that this would have little effect at the moment. By comparison with the 1967 and 1973 wars, Israel's losses of aircraft, tank and other material have been minor, handily offset by supplies captured from the PLO. Since there is no military pressure on Israel, as there was in the earlier wars, an American arms embargo wouldn't interrupt Israeli operations for months.

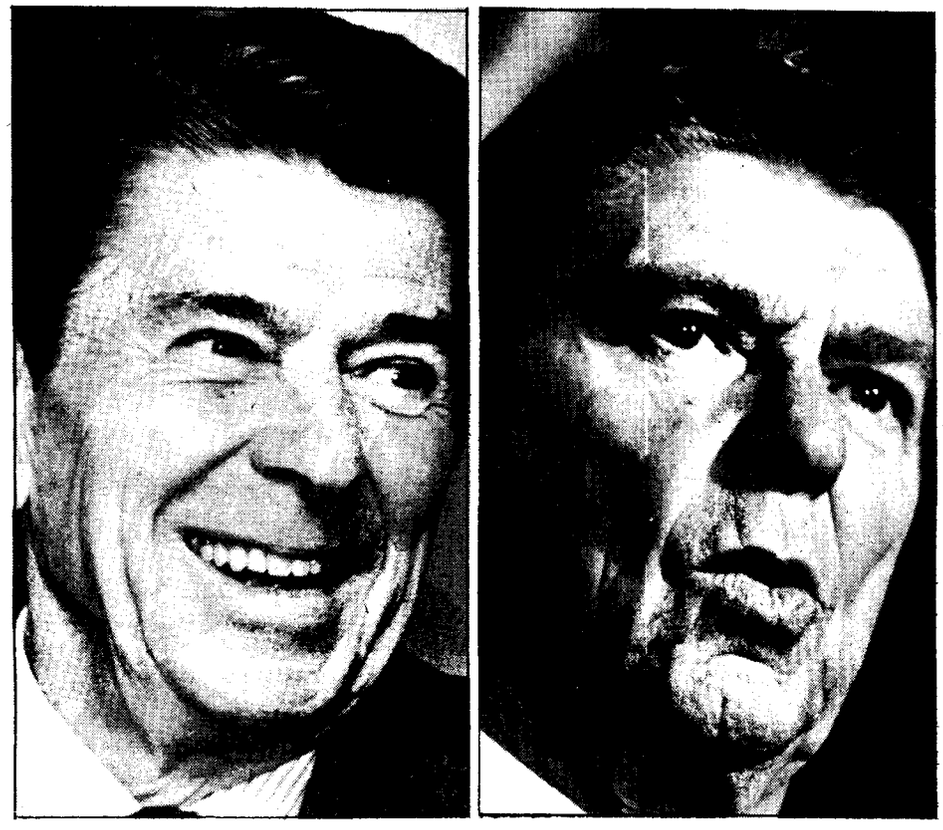
There are, however, far more potent tools of persuasion in the White House inventory. In a cable to Prime Minister Ben Gurion on 20 February 1957, President Eisenhower threatened to eliminate the tax deductibility and other privileges allowed to Israel's fund-raising in the US. Sales of State of Israel bonds peaked at $17 million in response to the 1973 war and last month Mr Begin launched a new bond drive to raise funds for the war. Charitable funds are greater than bond sales among American Jews, and they have been averaging an annual take for Israel of about $250 million in recent years. While war is usually good for fund-raisers, loss of tax deductible status for the gifts would be a crippling blow.

There are other sanctions that would strike at Israel's economic vulnerability. Since 1977 Israel has borrowed nearly $7 billion from the US to finance its arms purchases. Even after the Congress forgives about $500 million in debts each year, and postpones for ten years repayment of loan principal. Israel is in hock to the US for nearly $1 billion in interest alone. That figure will rise as the new line of F-15 and F-16 aircraft starts delivery next year.

Everyone knows the Israeli economy cannot keep up with this debt, and the solution Israel's supporters in the US Senate found in May was to increase the amount of economic assistance to cover this year's interest repayments. That measure passed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 9 to 8.

An Administration bent on getting Israel under control could make sure that the extra money disappeared before the bill

President Reagan practises diplomacy by physiognomy, but is Israel looking the other way?



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was finally passed. The result would be almost inevitable default for Israel, unless the Administration agreed to reschedule debt payments into the future. That too is another source of leverage if the White House wanted to use it. Because so many of Washington's clients for military hardware – Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Zaire, Sudan, along with Israel – are on the point of bankruptcy, there has been steady demand for rescheduling debts. As a result the reserve fund for guaranteeing bank payments in case of non-payment has sunk perilously low. If Israel were to join the other bankrupts, the Administration would have to go to Congress for another two to four billion dollars for the reserve. That money would add to the runaway budget deficits Mr Reagan is having to explain to the electorate, and for the first time the real cost to the American taxpayer of Israel's wars could be brought home.

For years Israel's lobbyists have manipulated US trade regulations to win duty-free access to American markets for Israeli exports. Technically, Israel is classified as a 'developing country', and under the trade rules even the most sophisticated industrial manufacturers can enter the US at a competitive advantage. One-third of Israel's trade with the US enjoys this duty-free benefit. At a stroke, the White House could discover that Israel is no longer a 'developing country'.

Still other changes in Defense Department rules could put a stop to the arrangement that permits countries receiving security assistance from the US to spend American cash on Israel-produced arms. This boon to the Israeli armaments industry was one of the payoffs extracted by General Sharon during the last negotiations over the Saudi AWACs sale and the 'Memorandum of Strategic Understanding'. It provides a back channel for the US to boost Israel's export earnings, at the same time as it arms regimes of Central America and Africa about which many people in Congress have qualms.

The trouble with economic sanctions on Israel is that they backfire if they reduce Israel's export earnings and reduce its ability to pay off US debts. The White House is seriously concerned that once it begins bluffing with these measures, it may wind up with a unilateral declaration from Mr Begin abrogating his debts and renouncing repayment. Israel would be bankrupt, but having guaranteed the loans, the US government would be obliged to pay off Israel's creditors.

There is also a possibility that Israel would retaliate by widening the war in Lebanon, and moving against the Syrian and Palestinian forces (along with Iranian, Libyan and Yemeni detachments) which are in position in the Bekaa Valley and along the Syrian border. That could very well embroil the Soviet Union directly, forcing the US into a superpower confrontation it has so far tried to avoid. Neither an arms embargo nor economic sanctions against Israel could then be sustained, even if the Israelis clearly provoked it. This is exactly what was meant when a 'senior Israeli official' told the American press recently that sanctions against Israel could make the siege of Beirut 'look like peanuts'. □

MULTINATIONALS

Workers' rights and Wall Street blues

DENIS MACSHANE reports evidence that American business is getting worried by moves towards European workers' rights

ANTI-MARKETEERS who wanted to read a politically-motivated newspaper that is currently in the vanguard of Euro-knocking should drop their copies of *Tribune, Labour Weekly* or *Socialist Worker*. Instead they should be buying the *Wall Street Journal* which, in a series of increasingly hysterical articles and editorials, has been offering American businessmen and financiers a vision of socialistic intervention by the EEC in American management's right to manage their multinationals as they see fit.

The *Wall Street Journal* campaign is against what, on the face of it, appears to be fairly moderate proposals. The EEC Commission is seeking to give workers more right to information about changes that their employers might wish to impose that could alter the conditions of work or affect future job security. The Vredling Directive, named after its originator, Dutch Socialist Henk Vredling who is an EEC commissioner responsible for social and employment affairs, was launched in 1980. It is now going through the crucial stage of seeking approval from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

To quote the *Wall Street Journal:*

> The premise underlying the Vredling directive is that workers should have far more right to be informed and consulted about the things that affect their working lives. To assure this, the directive would require any company with 50 or more employees within the Common Market to give these workers annually a 'clear picture' of its global plans. It would also be obliged to inform them before taking any decision 'liable to substantially impact' on their interests, 'with a view towards agreement'.

Split infinitives apart, the *Wall Street Journal's* summary conveys perfectly fairly the spirit of the Vredling directive. Why then the hostility? The reason is that the directive would apply, with legal force, throughout the community and instead of the well-meaning but ineffective codes of practice for multinational companies drawn up by bodies such as the OECD, ILO and UN, the Vredling directive would give workers and their unions concrete and implementable rights.

According to the *Wall Street Journal* US business representatives in Brussels reckon the directive would 'strip international management of its decision-making powers'. 'How much information', it demands, 'can a manager be expected to give to the leaders of Communist-controlled labour orgainsations? He's not going to give confidential information to people who are just as likely to slip it off to Moscow as to the local employees.'

Worse, says the *Journal*, the directive would require a company such as ITT or Ford that was threatening redundancies in Germany or Britain to provide information about the multinational's activities, trading profitability, and future investment plans, not just for the country under threat but world-wide. Unions would also be able to ask questions about multinationals' operations and treatment of workers in South Africa or Brazil, for example. As one American lawyer, quoted in the *Wall Street Journal,* says: 'Should your shoe factory in Italy have a say in your decision on your telephone equipment factory in Germany?

THAT THE Vredling directive has got this far is surprising, in view of the composition of the Commission and the European Parliament. However, as the research of the European Trade Union Institute shows, there are increasing numbers of abrupt closures of multinational subsidiaries, without even the scantiest attempt at consultation – and these have angered centrist and liberal politicians as well as the left in Europe. Laws which require information disclosure on a national basis, such as those in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, have been flouted by multinationals with no further interest in operating in a specific national market. But not even the biggest multinational dare contemplate cutting itself out of the entire EEC market.

Hence the campaign to destroy, or weaken to the point of irrelevance, the Vredling directive. Much hope is placed in Norman Tebbit who has already condemned the proposal. He may try to veto it when the Council of Ministers meets later this autumn, but the EEC's grindingly slow process for turning proposals into community law means that the earliest possible date for implementing the Vredling directive is 1987 – and it may therefore be a shrewder tactical move to let the consultation process continue in the hope of watering down the current proposal. At the moment Tebbit would find himself in a minority of one on the Council of Minsters and, as was seen earlier this year in the row over farm prices, a minority of one, even if it is Britain, does not guarantee a veto. The argument accepted by other governments is not hostile to multinationals *per se* but considers that a uniquely *national* attempt to regulate an *international* problem is unlikely to work. □

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THIRD WORLD

Rendering unto Caesar

ADRIAN PENNINK and STEVE ASKIN report on an agency that has been mixing its aid and its missionary work

A MAMMOTH American aid agency which is raising money in Britain through a high-profile advertising campaign, has run into a barrage of criticism over the handling of its relief work in Central America, Zimbabwe and other Third World countries. Among the charges: that the agency has repeatedly used the threat of withdrawing food to force aid recipients to attend religious services; that it has collaborated with repressive security forces and that it has failed to defend the human rights of the refugees under its care.

The agency, the Los Angeles-based fundamentalist Christian group World Vision, has become familiar to millions in Britain through its Childcare sponsor-a-child advertisements in the popular daily press, the *TV Times* and the *Radio Times*. Last year 3,500 people took up the offer to sponsor a child for £9 a month. British sponsors are joined by more than 300,000 worldwide in a £68 million operation (Oxfam, Britain's largest relief organisation had a budget of £16 million last year), with 550 full-time employees and projects in 85 countries.

'We promise to use your monthly gift with conscientious care and what we trust is wisdom,' states one leaflet. But a continent away in Honduras, World Vision's promise of Christian responsibility has become a bad joke among other relief agencies, Catholic priests and many of the 3,500 Salvadoreans who sought refuge from their war-ravaged country in World Vision-run camps across the border.

These critics point to an incident last year as the turning point in their relationship with World Vision. That evening two Salvadorean refugees arrived in Limone No. 2 camp. The World Vision camp coordinator reported their names to local authorities. The next day Honduran soldiers demanded to see the refugees and took them away in a jeep. Two days later the refugees' lifeless bodies were found by the Lempa river which forms the border between Honduras and El Slavador.

After an internal investigation of the incident, World Vision denied responsibility for the deaths, although in its report the agency quotes the camp supervisor as saying to the refugees: 'I didn't do it, but if you keep on like this, maybe I will next time.' 'From that point onward,' the report continues, 'the supervisor was viewed with suspicion by the refugees.'

This suspicion was fuelled by World Vision's subsequent actions. Father Earl Gallagher, a US priest who worked with the refugees in the border region told how World Vision workers repeatedly used food to pressure the Catholic refugees to attend Protestant churches. 'If they don't accept, they are warned that their food is going to be cut and that they will be handed over to the military authorities who in turn will hand them over to the Salvadorean authorities which means instant death,' Gallagher said.

He remembered an instance when a World Vision representative visited a home near Guarita where 15 Salvadoreans were living. According to Gallagher, the refugees were told: 'You accept this sect or I'm going to hand you over to the Salvadoreans.' World Vision's own report confirms Gallagher's allegations 'We have documented cases where threats were made to withhold food if people did not attend Protestant services,' the report states. Six World Vision workers were later dismissed for what the agency calls 'the improper use of food.'

The same report lists 29 'operational deficiences and related factors' – among them the agency's strong ties with the Honduran and Salvadorean militaries and its attitude towards human rights. It confirms that World Vision built close links with the Honduran military and police while other agencies challenged the authorities on human rights issues. Last year, several aid groups reported that they had stopped registering refugees with the government, because they suspected names were being handed over to the death squads. World Vision continued to supply the names. 'We were not aligned with the defenders of the human rights of the refugees,' the report says, 'we were being pushed toward a pro-government, pro-military position, a position perceived as being contra to the Catholic Church, the relief agencies and the people.'

While World Vision claims to have put its operation in order by dismissing many of its field workers, to its critics the agency's role in Honduras was just one more reminder that it could not be trusted. Church officials from 17 countries have expressed their concerns at the extent to which the agency mixes relief work with proselytising among the poor. World Vision denies that its missionary work affects relief activities. 'There are no special conditions placed on a child or the family before receiving aid,' states one fund-raising leaflet. 'They are all helped on the basis of need.' □

World Vision camp for Salvadorean refugees in Honduras.

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DIARY

Bernard Crick

New England

We have been staying in the bustling but gentle household of Judy Norsigian, a leading spirit in the Boston Women's Health Collective. The collective is not a commune, simply a continuous educational and publishing venture. Each member leads a more or less normal home life. The collective rents a room in the Armenian Church on Mount Auburn Street – a long street rather like the King's Road, Chelsea, which moves from poor, run-down housing in Watertown to the rich boutiques and book shops of Harvard Square. But the famous feminist health guide, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, hasn't anything for sunburn. Judy recommended cactus juice. It was her Armenian Aunt Tillie who had done for us with a kind invitation to Salisbury Beach, New Hampshire, where she absent-mindedly cooked us for five hours at 92° without oil or foil. Then pain and sickness alternately. I now know what a normal family holiday is.

○

Old biplanes slowly perambulated overhead towing advertising slogans, reminding me of childhood in the South London suburbs in the 1930s. One merely offered: 'All You Can Eat for $5 at Ashworths', but another – though this was, Aunt Tillie said, 'a family beach' – proclaimed: FROLIC TONITE SLBRY BEACH FEMALE JELLO WRESTLIN. Alas, they still have to use mud in Yorkshire or Hattersland. But the children liked best a way-side sign:

LOBSTERS.

LIVE OR BOILED

CIGARETTES

I could only match that with a Surrey RABBITS EGGS; but my old New England favourite was still there: NIGHTCRAWLERS FOR SALE.

○

Even the *Boston Globe*, which denounces the IRA and HMG with even-handedness (and got really tied in knots over the Falklands), impartially ignored both Jim Prior's American visit and Mr Haughey's Galway East by-election. American papers don't so much ignore the outside world as simply select two or three events or areas each week for in-depth treatment, much like television; but there's no pretence at wide coverage. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* report Northern Ireland fairly regularly in terms of incidents, but very rarely Ireland in terms of politics. The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Boston Globe*, traditionally American-Irish papers, are also clear (as some of their readers are not) that the IRA and the Irish Government are somewhat different entities, and both papers support 'giving' (and 'giving' could become as important to the American-Irish as it is to the American Jewish community) to the clean Ireland Fund rather than to the dubious 'Noraid'.

○

'Abscam' continues to be a strictly domestic issue, since all the 'Arabs' offering bribes to businessmen were in fact 100 per cent American FBI agents. These agents, as House and Senate Committees now investigate the investigators, protest that they were innocent of intent to suborn legislators: they were shocked and surprised when their unsuspecting middleman began to bring them Congressmen and Senators, and, after all, of 32 who nibbled only 17 in fact swallowed the bribes. Senator Simpson said they should have 'stopped fishing' far earlier and rightly accused them of being 'giddy with success' (where did that phrase some from, Senator?). If they had posed as agents of Israel, would they have hooked more or less? More seriously, the Jewish lobby was badly discredited both by overextending itself and then failing to stop the sale of AWAC (the electronic observation planes) to the Saudis. And then came the Lebanon invasion: the photographs, the newsreels, Begin's intransigence and contempt for ordinary opinion. He doesn't even try to look nice. 'If Nixon could speak to the Chinese Reds, my friend, why can't Begin speak to the PLO', said the presenter of a popular Boston phone-in.

○

My friend (being in Community Health) noted this from a syndicated Agony Column:

Dear Ann Landers,

I am 48 years old, married and have four children – all wonderful – and a beautiful grandchild.

I have been a flasher since I was a young boy. I always knew it was wrong and tried to get over the habit for a long time. I saw several doctors for counseling but none of them could help me. I stopped going to church nine years ago when my wife and I separated. On February 27 something made me go back to Church and take communion. I became very emotional during communion and began to cry like a baby. That experience changed my life. Since then I have no desire to flash. I feel born again. My good wife and I are back together and we have never been happier.

Every week I go to the shrine and pray for all flashers to put God and the blessed Virgin Mary in their lives and free themselves of the loathsome habit. I am writing to you because I want to tell your millions of readers prayer and faith can work miracles when all else fails. I am living proof.

A Former Flasher from the Bronx

It is my scholarly understanding that since the above passage is less than 400 words it can be quoted without permission for fair critical comment. No comment, couldn't be fairer. I would only deconstruct the test to indicate that the phrases 'born again' and 'very emotional during communion' suggest that now even the Catholic Church has to accommodate the pentacostal, charismatic spirit. Perhaps the therapeutic results justify the jumping liturgies and the ecclesiastical suffering. But Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a flasher. I wonder if he would have ever written *Emile* and *Le Contrat Social* had he been born again?

○

Harvard Square has changed but Harvard Yard and the College are much the same as 30 years ago when I studied there. Then beer cans were so new and I so green that I ran with a box of them to a party, so shaking them that I sprayed the room, and then, putting the remainder outside on the window ledge to cool (real lateral thinking), froze them solid. An Assistant Professor called Kissinger asked me to advise him on the British applicants to his Ford Foundation summer school for future world leaders, but the second year he said he would do them himself for 'while you have a brilliant mind, Bernard, you are not serious enough to go far in politics'. I beamed with pleasure: there was always a certain aptness and honesty in Henry's arrogance. He realised that I had thrown out too many of the Oxbridge creeps, climbers and the hard-to-stops whom he wanted. My best memory of Harvard in those years was when the entire College downed tools and abandoned classes for several days to watch television as Robert Welch, a Boston attorney appearing for the Army, first probed and then tore into Senator Joseph McCarthy. The crimes of capitalist democracy are great, but the flashings and exposures can be as dramatic as the cover-ups.

○

Tomorrow my friend takes her two offspring to Maine and I fulfil an old desire by taking my two (one awaiting 'A' level results and the other already an unemployed actor) down South for three weeks of camping and curiosity. But like the British and French fleets when they left Scutari Bay to humble the Czar, we haven't decided where to go. One wants to get to New Orleans, the other to Los Angeles. I dread the politic compromise.

Professor Crick is taking his summer holiday in the USA and will be contributing an occasional diary.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

□ Mr Ray Buckton, the train drivers' leader, said the call for further productivity measures came as a surprise. 'It's a recipe for disaster,' he said – *The Scotsman* (W. G. A. Inglis)

□ Joe, 65 – now Baron Gormley of Ashton-in-Makerfield, his home town in Lancashire – swore allegiance to the Queen and received a deafening cheer from 200 peers. Afterwards he said: 'Now it's up to me to get on with the job.' The new Lady Gormley watched the ceremony, but Joe said: 'I don't think it will change Nellie.' – *Daily Record* (Brian Smith)

□ A four-inch-diameter piece of concrete kissed by the Pope when he knelt on landing at Gatwick Airport is to be preserved by the British Airports Authority and displayed in the airport, it was announced yesterday. – *Daily Telegraph* (A. Woodward)

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LETTERS

Victim of prejudice

Leigh Hatts, 45 Dolben Street, London SE1

Your editorial on Commander Trestrail (*NS* 30 July) was better than most Fleet Street leaders.

It appears that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner obtained Commander Trestrail's resignation while the Queen was under sedation in a nearby hospital. A few days earlier Her Majesty had refused Mr Trestrail's offer of resignation. However, the Queen found (after a 36-hour absence from the Palace) that a man she liked and trusted enough to have with her on public and private occasions had been irrevocably removed from her service.

Although the Commander's resignation was announced as being 'for personal reasons', Mr Whitelaw found it necessary to add his sensational announcement an hour later. This was surely cruel and unnecessary. The idea of a Home Secretary arriving breathless in the House to announce that a person once had an affair will one day be considered laughable and incredible.

Double standards

Juliet Offner, 13 Grayshott Close, Winchester

In reply to Andrew Dobson's letter (*NS* 23 July) about Judith Mullard's article 'Death of a Librarian', I would like to say that the point is not that, in being convicted of manslaughter rather than murder, Peter Wood faces a shorter sentence; rather that, in passing this judgment, the Court effectively blamed Mary Bristow for her own death. The defence pleaded mitigating circumstances of provocation and diminished responsibility, arguing that by her actions she provoked him, by her actions she diminished his responsibility. Wood's case was that she was more intelligent and of a higher class than her killer; that she espoused causes like 'CND', 'women's lib', and 'free love'; that she refused to marry Wood; and that these actions of hers provoked Wood's understandable, if slightly extreme, reaction. The Judge's sentence made no provision for psychiatric treatment.

I do no care about Wood's fate except that, with remission and the time already served, he may well be free within two years, and what has been done to stop him 'reacting' in the same way to another woman? And there are still strong, independent women around, though perhaps none as remarkable as Mary Bristow. As one of a group of women who attended the trial, I would say to Andrew Dobson that we do not ask for, or expect, justice from the legal system – but we are angry at the injustice of a system that can, in this way, excuse the violence done to a woman by a man.

Mary Bristow *was* blamed for her own death.

ROGER WODDIS

Fowler's Syndrome

The patient shows a marked disinclination
To see a barely-living wage increased,
And suffers, too, from chronic constipation,
Withholding what is due to be released.

Appeals to reason worsen his condition,
Resulting in rigidity of mind;
He will refuse to alter his position,
And thus appears to be both deaf and blind.

The brain, now turned to sponge, begins to shrivel,
The brow grows colder and the eyes beneath;
The patient proves his case by talking drivel
And resolutely lying through his teeth.

The mouth becomes a rectal gate, and from it
A yellow fluid drips, as that from birds,
Producing a compulsive urge to vomit
In those who have to listen to his words.

The malady is known for its persistence,
There is no certain cure for this disease,
Except to summon physical assistance
And bring the patient firmly to his knees.

Misdirected fun

Roger Brown, Print Editor, The British Deaf Association, 38 Victoria Place, Carlisle

We know that it is a good wheeze to use the words of others to poke fun, but the extract from the *British Deaf News* (*NS*, This England, 16 July) may also find another target apart from that intended. It should be pointed out that the extract was a letter to the editor which appeared in the January-February *BDN*. You may be interested in a letter which appeared in the subsequent (March-April) *BDN*:

> By election
> In reply to Mr Smith's letter in the January/February issue of the *British Deaf News*, I just wish to make the point that, as one of the interpreters interpreting for Mr Foot at the Labour Party Conference, there was no time at which we made a statement that we found great difficulty in translating Mr Foot's speech into sign language. In fact, Mr Foot's speech was probably one of the easier ones to interpret during the round of party political conferences. The major problem for the interpreters was merely the speed of Mr Foot's presentation.
> *R. Simpson, pp Martin Colville, Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh.*

After Mr Foot addressed the Labour Party Conference last year a skilled interpreter, questioned by a *Daily Telegraph* reporter, agreed that he was not easy to interpret. By the nature of their delivery all orators present special problems for interpreting into any language. The *Daily Telegraph*, we understand, published this 'criticism', Radio 4 picked it up, our correspondent picked it up from Radio 4 and your contributor picked it up from our letters column.

All this could have a damaging side-effect. The BDA is hoping to repeat last year's experiment and will be pressing for interpreters to be included on all television broadcasts from Party Political Conferences this year. We trust that the Labour Party is worldly-wise enough to realise how easily innocent words can be inadvertently twisted. Without such maturity a refusal to co-operate could deprive the British Deaf Community of a rare chance of political participation – albeit, for the time being at least, a largely passive participation.

The BDA is a democratically run national charity primarily representing profoundly deaf people, those completely deafened from birth or before speech is acquired. British Sign Language is their preferred or only means of communication; without interpreters meaningful interaction with the hearing world is negligible for the vast majority.

Sexual harassment

Mark Barrington-Ward, London Editor, Westminster Press, 8-16 Great New Street, London EC4

There is no pleasing some people! Sarah Benton ('Groping Fleet Street', *NS* 23 July) seems to think it wrong that what she herself describes as 'a long, largely sympathetic article by journalist Adam Curtis' on the pamphlet 'Sexual Harassment at Work' appeared in evening papers in Brighton, Bradford and Southend. (In fact it also appeared in some others belonging to Westminster Press.) She concluded in the next sentence that 'in the world of syndicated columns and agency copy, it only takes two to create a conspiracy of chauvinist values', which seems unfair to this particular article.

Adam Curtis, our Home Affairs correspondent, saw that this pamphlet was due to be published and obtained a copy. This group provides a service from its London office to enlarge editors' choice and supplement that from PA in some fields. Should this be a cause for complaint? It is economically unrealistic – especially in the present difficult climate – to suppose that each daily paper in the group could provide such a service for itself.

Jews and war

George Edinger, Reform Club, Pall Mall, London SW1

Ms Elfi Pallis is shockingly ignorant (*NS* 30 July) about the 450,000 Jewish community in Britain. It is quite untrue that they have ever been solidly behind Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. Far from it.

From the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 the old established Sephardic communities of Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Britain have entertained the most serious doubts about the whole Zionist concept. Of the two Jewish groups among whom I have had the closest contacts, the Anglo-Jewish Society and the German and Austrian Jews, including the refugees from Hitler, only a small minority were ever Zionists of any colour.

Readers' Questionnaires

A selection of your comments on the *New Statesman* appears on pp29-30.

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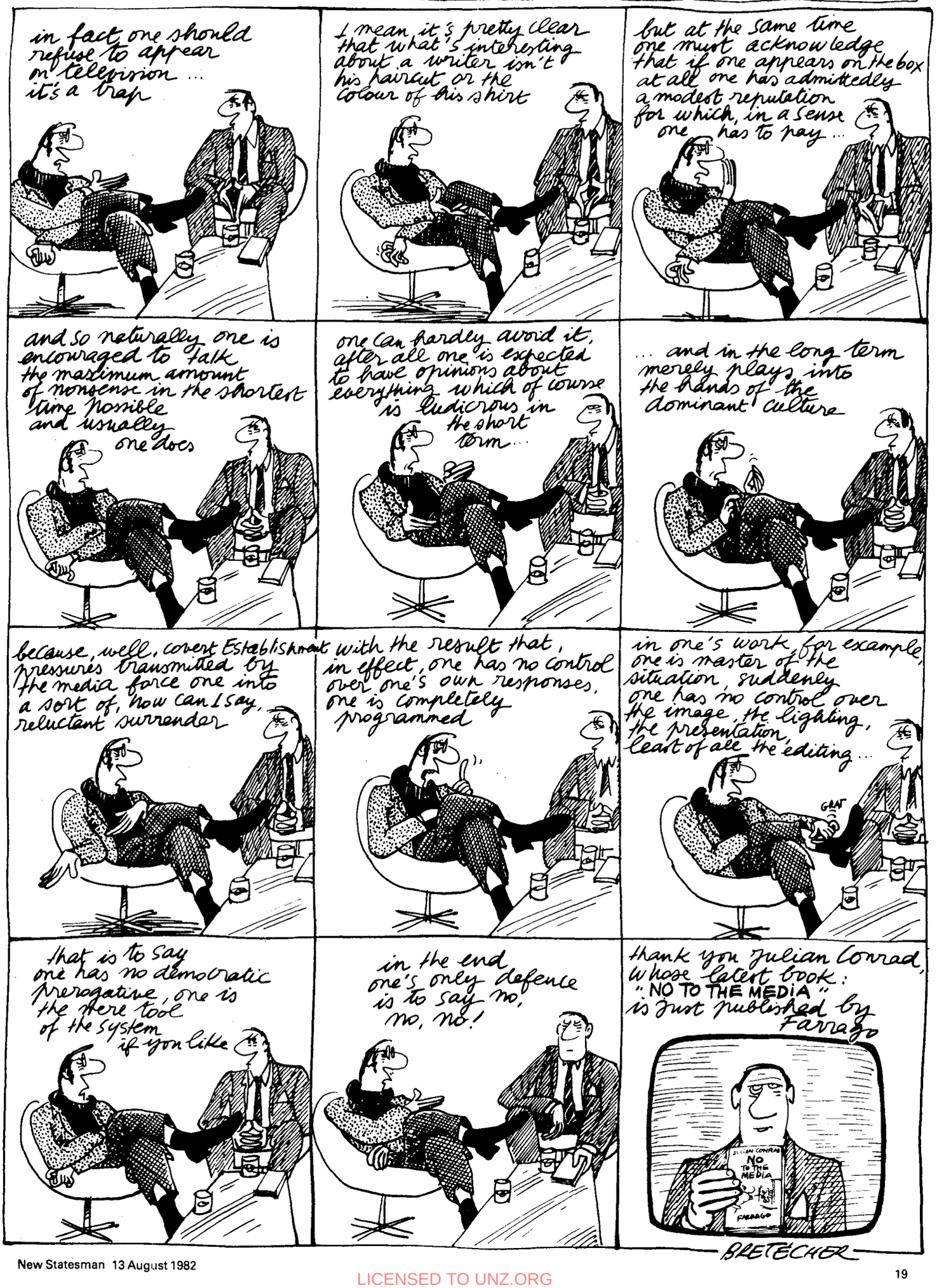
BRETECHER

AUTONOMY


in fact one should refuse to appear on television ... it's a trap
I mean it's pretty clear that what's interesting about a writer isn't his haircut or the colour of his shirt
but at the same time one must acknowledge that if one appears on the box at all one has admittedly a modest reputation for which, in a sense one has to pay ...
and so naturally one is encouraged to talk the maximum amount of nonsense in the shortest time possible and usually one does
one can hardly avoid it, after all one is expected to have opinions about everything which of course is ludicrous in the short term ...
... and in the long term merely plays into the hands of the dominant culture
because, well, covert Establishment pressures transmitted by the media force one into a sort of, how can I say, reluctant surrender
with the result that, in effect, one has no control over one's own responses, one is completely programmed
in one's work, for example, one is master of the situation, suddenly one has no control over the image, the lighting, the presentation, least of all the editing ...
GRAT
that is to say one has no democratic prerogative, one is the mere tool of the system if you like
in the end one's only defence is to say no, no, no!
thank you Julian Conrad, whose latest book: "NO TO THE MEDIA" is just published by Farrago
JULIAN CONRAD
NO TO THE MEDIA
FARRAGO
BRETECHER

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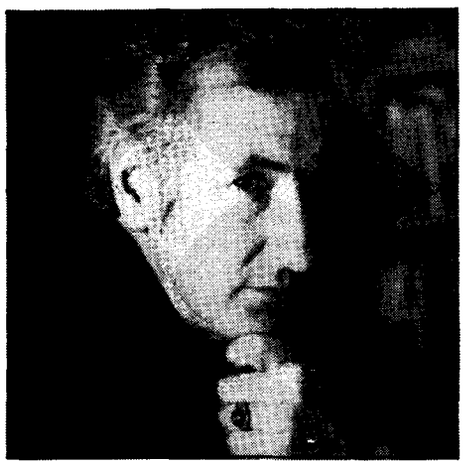
Pleading for the authenticity of the spirit

JOHN LUCAS reviews five new books of verse

IT IS PROBABLY inevitable that much modern Irish poetry should be preoccupied, even obsessed, with a sense of place. At its most typical such a pre-occupation has to do with a search for and affirmation of rootedness. Yeats famously claimed that from contact with the soil 'everything, Antaeus-like, grew strong'; but turning that claim into a programme for poetry can easily lead to rural whimsy or a backward-looking celebration of the past. I am not sure that John Montague always avoids



Montague (above) and Fenton (right)

these dangers, but this impressive volume makes clear that his concern with place customarily yields a poetry that's the opposite of escapist.

Montague is very much an historian, even an archaeologist, of Ireland:

> Shards
> Of a lost culture, the slopes
> Are strewn with cabins emptied
> In my lifetime.

This sense of stumbling across an Irish past is vital to much of his best work, but it also creates a problem. For everyone and everything is likely to turn into a cultural artefact ('Another emblem there!'); and in such poems as 'The Sean Bhean Bocht', 'Country Matters', 'Lament for the O'Neills', there's a sense of individuals being put on parade in order to demonstrate their Significance. Being human isn't enough. Of course, so intelligent a poet is aware of this danger and can turn it to advantage, as he does in a fine early poem, 'Like Dolmens Round My Childhood, the Old People':

> Ancient Ireland, indeed! I was reared by her bedside,
> The rune and the chant, evil eye and averted head,
> Formorian fierceness of family and local feud.
> For years they trespassed on my dreams,
> Until once, in a standing circle of stones,
> I felt their shadows pass
> Into that dark permanence of ancient forms.

Yet even this presumed laying of ghosts allows for their continued presence. And indeed in a way they are, to use the Yeatsian term, presences. Moreover, the very fact that they *are* presences means that they testify to that deeply-troubling tension between continuity and discontinuity which repeatedly surfaces in Montague's work, as it perhaps must. For the past out of which the presences emerge is infected by the particular history of Ireland, which can't be off-loaded. This is partly a matter of language. In several poems Montague introduces Gaelic words, but they thrust up self-consciously, shards of a lost culture; and indeed, in 'A Grafted Tongue', he recalls as a child using speech that 'stumbles over lost/syllables of an old order'.

EVERYWHERE the past breaks in, but never as simple consolation. There is, for example, the bitterly cunning 'Poisoned Lands' with its wicked last line, in which the poet imagines the land-owner saying 'If you too licked grass, you'd be dead today'. The colonised must toady to their masters, but having to lick what rhymes with grass is to come near to destroying yourself. (And somewhere behind the line, no doubt, is Spenser's wonderment at those Irish people he saw reduced to eating grass.) Montague evokes the brutal implications of such life in several good, mordant poems, and one is rather more than that. 'The Wild Dog Rose' is a rich, powerful poem about an old crone whom the poet has known since childhood, whose place and appearance he keenly evokes, and who tells him a terrible tale of how she was nearly raped by a drunk who broke into her cottage. The wild dog rose becomes a symbol of her suffering and also, strangely but truly, of something else:

> Briefly
> the air is strong with the smell
> of that weak flower, offering
> its crumbled yellow cup
> and pale bleeding lips
> fading to white at the rim
> of each bruised and heart-shaped petal.

Those subtly-cadenced lines voice a sense of generous vulnerability, even of love, and it is surely all-important that

Laurence Burns

Montague here uses unmetred verse, for its unemphatic, hesitant rhythms mean that he doesn't run the risk of improper shaping or emphasis. I imagine that he's learned a good deal from 20th-century American poets, in particular William Carlos Williams and (less valuably) Robert Creeley, and the consequence is that in manner his best poems usually enact discoveries; they do not feel as though an issue is being forced. It is a virtue of such a manner that it requires Montague to forgo the grand, heroic gesture or pose. What we have instead is the kind of balanced, impartial-it-may-seem voice that he imagines for the seagull:

> What a view he has
> of our town, riding
> inland, the seagull!

And although Montague's balance is hard-won, because he is committed to an Ireland from which the seagull can flap away, the poem's lean humour typifies his sceptical but not ungenerous temperament, and embodies the exactness of vision which he

Selected Poems by JOHN MONTAGUE *Oxford* £5.95
The Memory of War by JAMES FENTON *Salamander* £6.95
The Passages of Joy by THOM GUNN *Faber* £4 & £3
A Second Life by WILLIAM SCAMMELL *Peterloo* £4.50 & £3
The Flower Master by MEDBH McGUCKIAN *Oxford* £4

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speaks of in 'A Bright Day', where everything

> Takes on a witch-bright glow
> And even the clock on the mantel
> Moves its hands in a fierce delight
> Of so, and so, and so;

and which is present in the best of his love poems (especially 'All Legendary Obstacles'). To have sustained this vision so successfully makes the publication of this *Selected Poems* an important occasion.

JAMES FENTON's volume, beautifully produced by the Salamander Press, is utterly arresting, alive from first to last with inventive wit. In an interview with Andrew Motion in the current *Poetry Review* Fenton remarks that 'poetic language is very much denatured and overworked, and it needs a lot of new fertilizer'. The fertilizer is self-consciously applied in 'Exempla', which are made up of a number of 'found' poems taken from a variety of sources, mostly of a scientific nature, and which on the whole are bound to be of more interest to him, as a practising poet, than they are to the reader. But this is emphatically untrue of 'The Fruit-Grower in War-time (and some of his enemies)' a brilliantly ingenious, teasing and troubling poem which deals with political, social and moral issues in a most compelling manner derived in part from Marianne Moore. (Fenton weaves into his poem quotations from Raymond Smith's *The Fruit-Grower* in a way that's reminiscent of her, and the complicated syllabic pattern of his stanzas also recalls her work.) Sometimes, indeed, his tone comes close to pastiche. Compare, for example,

> We find it hard,
> Knowing that a bad harvest or a poor crop
> Can overthrow a state,
> To overestimate
> The value of his work

with any number of lines from her great poem 'The Steeplejack'. And not far behind Fenton's poem one can also detect the influence of Auden, less as a matter of style than in a certain quizzical habit of mind (and Auden, of course, was much indebted to Moore in some of his later work). Yet these influences are entirely beneficial and they show to even better effect in 'Nest of Vampires', 'Chosun' and 'A Staffordshire Murderer' – strange, riddling and thrilling narratives that resist the intelligence almost successfully, as does 'A German Requiem' with its nagging sense of how difficult it is to be fully understood and know what it is we see, imagine, remember, and yet which has about it an absolute authenticity of imagination.

The handful of poems on the Cambodian war, on the other hand, seem at first glance rather more straightforward. Yet the best one, 'Dead Soldiers', has an elusive, teasing quality to it, and exhibits the delight Fenton typically takes in following up the unexpected implications of stock phrases:

> On every bottle, Napoleon Bonaparte
> Pleaded for the authenticity of the spirit.
> They called the empties Dead Soldiers
> And rejoiced to see them pile up at our feet.

There's also the comic brio of the section called 'The Empire of the Senseless', particularly in its invention of a Gunn-like world of animal existentialists:

> Here come the capybaras on their bikes.
> They swerve into the friendly, leafy square
> Knocking the angwantibos off their trikes,
> Giving the old-age coypus a bad scare.

One can't be judicious in a short review and, faced with *The Memory of War*, I see no reason to regret the fact. I will say only that anyone who doesn't buy it is not interested in poetry.

THE TITLE of Thom Gunn's new volume comes from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*: 'Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,/ And shuts up all the passages of joy.' It begins with an elegy to someone who committed suicide –

> Even the terror
> of leaving life like that
> better than the terror
> of being unable to handle it –

and it ends with 'Night Taxi', a meditation in which the speaker knows that 'I have to be loose,/like my light embrace of the wheel, loose but in control', and which concludes with his seeing

> high above the lamp-post
> but touched by its farthest light
> a curtain of rain already blowing
> against black eucalyptus tops.

In between come poems all of which show that into each life some rain must fall.

I do not invoke that cliché casually, but because I am sorry to say that *The Passages of Joy* seems to me an utterly cliché-ridden collection. There are clichés of phrase: the poet speaks of being 'buried' in his work, he remembers a friend's 'boisterous sense of fun', he 'tingles' with knowledge. There are clichés of thought, of which the poem to Elvis Presley is a particularly unfortunate example:

> What was the pain
> he needed to kill
> if not the ultimate pain
> of feeling no pain?

But above all, it is the cliché of manner that hurts this volume. There are two such manners. One is the laid-back, free-form, West Coast style of the majority of the poems, which is so slack as to be almost enervate, and which therefore works only when it mimes its subject matter as in 'Slow Walker':

> I look at the cousin,
> eighteen, across the breakfast.
> He had to be called and called.
> He smiles, but without conviction. He will not
> have tea, oh OK,
> if it's no trouble,
> he will have tea.

The other is that tight, formal style with which Gunn began and which now has about it a kind of metallic heaviness, a lack of rhythmic grace which Yvor Winters sanctioned (he didn't approve of imitative form) but which is in fact fatally dull. The trouble with *The Passages of Joy* is that the voice we are required to listen to finds it very difficult to say anything that is new, plausible or engaging.

Scammell lacks Fenton's panache and imaginative verve but he has his own line of wit:

> The screes
> are deep and thinking one emotion through
> like Hegel's avalanche of counterpoint
> prodding the Absolute to a day's turn.
> Sheep press their starter-buttons all night long.

Such wit works best as a mode of thought rather than as a matter of observation, and Scammell sometimes comes near to spoiling a poem because he can't resist a telling image or metaphor; he's a bit too keen to please. (But he won't give unqualified pleasure unless he pays more attention to his rhymes, some of which are horrendous.) His characteristically laconic manner allows him to score a number of successes, for example in 'Hostages', a rueful-comic parable about parent-child relationships and what they may portend:

> 'Give me one
> good reason why I should go to bed!'
> I spring amongst the colours of revolt,
> waving a gun
> at chaos. Civilisation's setting in.

Other good poems in this mode include 'The Visit', 'Marriage Song', and the sequence 'Time Past', which probably owes something to Tony Harrison but which, in its painful, affectionate memory of childhood, is rescued from tediousness by an occasional radiant exactness of recall. Given this, the fine sense of peopled places, and the imaginative generosity of 'Wishbone' (a well-judged and tightly-written woman's meditation), there is every reason to assume that if Scammell continues to extend his range he will become a very good poet indeed.

In *The Flower Master* Medbh McGuckian shows that she is already a great phrase-maker. But phrases do not make poems and nor, I think, does she. At all events, her transitions are so abrupt, opaque and inconsequential as to be self-defeating. In addition there is a fey whimsicality about her work which some may find appealing but which sets this particular reader's teeth on edge:

> This black container calls for sloes, sweet
> Sultan, dainty nipplewort, in honour
> Of a special guest, who summoned to the
> Tea ceremony, must stoop to our doorway,
> Our fontanelle, the trout's dimpled feet.

'Sweet', 'dainty': this isn't the new fertilizer, it's merely the same old sterile language that's been around for far too long and that can't be kicked into life by any amount of trout's feet, dimpled or otherwise. (Readers can have fun attaching adjectives of their own devising to the McGuckian run of nouns.) This is not to say that McGuckian lacks talent, but it is to insist that such talent needs to be disciplined, not indulged like a spoilt child. □

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FICTION 1: Patricia Craig

A foot off the ground

The 27th Kingdom by ALICE THOMAS ELLIS *Duckworth* £7.95
Fires by MARGUERITE YOURCENAR *Aidan Ellis* £7.50
The Patriot Game by GEORGE V. HIGGINS *Secker* £7.50

After *The Sin Eater* and *The Birds of the Air*, we know what to expect from Alice Thomas Ellis: a work as sharp and pungent as pine needles, full of muted richness and effortless wit. This author is a latter-day fabulist who uses legends, anecdotes and medieval tales to illuminate her stories, coldly and judiciously inserting an emblematic sketch at an appropriate moment. **The 27th Kingdom**, indeed, which is further away from comic social realism than its predecessors, though not divorced from this mode altogether, puts a succession of such brightly expository incidents in the place of plot. Its characters are storytellers, or, more frequently, those about whom stories are told – all fixed, or transfixed, in their vivid eccentricities by an author who relishes the absurd and macabre as well as the enigmatic.

The setting is Chelsea, a district more dilapidated, more intriguing, and grubbier than it is at present. The year is 1954. Railings, sacrificed to the war effort, have not been replaced; bomb damage has made some parts of the area unsafe. Here lives Aunt Irene (pronounced to rhyme with serener), of boyar ancestry, with her nephew Kyril, a victim, as far as his character is concerned, of excessive beauty and self-satisfaction. Dancing Master House, after a privileged Italian of the Tudor era who died by violence, is the name of their home.

To Dancing Master House comes black Valentine, a postulant at a convent in Wales where the Mother Superior is Aunt Irene's sister. Tropical, thaumaturgic Valentine, as incorruptible as the apple (evidence of her powers) the Reverend Mother keeps in a drawer at the convent, has a death by drowning as an ingredient of her story. The drowned and the hanged (as in a Tarot pack) loom large in the novel.

Almost everyone in *The 27th Kingdom* exists under the threat of being caught up with, which makes for a state of comic agitation. Aunt Irene believes herself to be the object of merciless harrying on the part of an unusually devoted income-tax inspector.

The robust O'Connors, house clearers and engaging crooks, who supply Aunt Irene with desirable artefacts (antique tiles and the like), easy at the time for the enterprising to come by, tend to take themselves rather quickly out of the path of the police. A drunken major, whose wife, ignorant and foolish as a peahen, is Aunt Irene's disgruntled char, awaits the onset of *delirium tremens* and its accompanying delusions; when it hits him he loses the ability to distinguish between a pigeon and a fiend.

Strange varieties of refreshment, spiritual and temporal, keep them going. They eat horses, transformed by Aunt Irene into a species of delicacy; they enter churches for various purposes, in varying states of mind. (Valentine, as composed as a Renaissance Virgin, unmoved by the manifestations of attraction or aversion in others, is the purest at heart.) Clues to the novelist's purpose, in the form of decorative and disconcerting motifs – dancing, levitating, hanging ('the hanged, as they die, dance in the air')– are dotted about the narrative, but don't eradicate the playful ambiguity which is a part of her stock-in-trade. Her third novel is slighter than *The Sin Eater*, and not quite so breathtaking an achievement as *The Birds of the Air*, but it shows no diminution in the stylish acerbity and idiosyncrasy that distinguish her fiction. Stevie Smith had a phrase for this type of buoyant, delicate and devious undertaking: a foot-off-the-ground novel that came by the left hand.

NO SUCH incisive lightness of manner characterises **Fires**, a work composed in 1935 in the aftermath of a love affair. To appreciate fully this sequence of prose poems interspersed with *pensées*, it's necessary to understand the impulse behind it: to engender emotional recuperation.

Marguerite Yourcenar associates her suffering with the suffering of figures out of classical mythology, for each of whom a lavish monologue is constructed. As well as ornate imagery, we find deep plunging into all kinds of dementia and dismay.

The effect is striking, if at times too intense and rich – all that Attic turbulence, passion and relish for blood. Not that these are mere retellings: Yourcenar superimposes a contemporary sense of emptiness, intrigue and deracination on her antique themes, turning Sappho, for instance, into a circus acrobat between the wars, and investing a plot of 525 BC with overtones of revolution in the 20th century. As an exercise in exorcism, it's impressive.

AFTER THE lyrical, the loquacious. The characters of **The Patriot Game** spend a large proportion of the novel trying to outdo one another in seedy volubility. The dialogues they engage in, an endless series of them, in a Boston vernacular, are all splendidly abusive and fluent, if not always exactly pointed. Self-assertion, as depicted here, means making no bones about enumerating your antagonist's more colourful defects; breaking bones, your own and others' – well, this is inevitable, even admirable, if you're a tough policeman like Higgins's hero, in pursuit of IRA gun-runners.

The patriot game (from a song quoted in the book but not assigned to its author, Dominic Behan) is to do with Irish terrorism, or one of its offshoots; but this, and its possibilities in terms of plot, interests Higgins rather less than unrestrained friction, expressed in elaborate gibes. □

FICTION 2: Robert Hutchison

Calibans

The Essex Factor by JOHN MORROW *Blackstaff* £4.50
Ginger, You're Barmy by DAVID LODGE *Secker* £7.95

Colourless, prematurely balding Sidney Perkins, product of a nest of chapel Fabians in Kent – 'the sort of bugger we can blame with impunity if anything goes wrong in the bogs' – has just been appointed Opposition Spokesman on Irish Affairs. Perkins's first assignment is to act as observer at a Mammoth Protest March in Belfast. At the airport he is welcomed by Seamus O'Fee and other members of the Civil Liberties Action Committee, including O'Fee's beautiful wife, who is present just in case Perkins doesn't turn out to be 'a raving fruit machine'. Within hours of arrival and after a memorable first encounter with an Ulster Fry, Sidney is kissing Anne-Marie O'Fee behind the bushes.

The next day's March, headed by the Little Flower Pioneer Accordion Band begins as 'a Busby Berkeley carnival of flesh and flash', but Confrontation, Anarchy and Hell are biding their time just round the corner. Sidney, in his flat cap and tweeds, is felled by a baton blow, his head cut, his left arm paralysed. Anne-Marie leads him away from the central battle ground, but the police, like rampaging elephants, are after them. Belfast street theatre rules, OK? Indeed the dazed Sidney is soon congratulating the one-eyed captain of a Molotov cocktail factory on his superb charade, his very professional production. To which One-Eye replies that this is the year of the fit-ups: 'What we lack in the way of gorgeous raiment and dazzling lights we make up for with a sense of occasion'. From being an observer, Sidney is forced into an important, though non-speaking, part.

By the end of the day Seamus O'Fee lies among the dead, his wife lies in bed with a noseless Caliban, Sidney has been knocked more or less senseless and laid Her Majesty's highly frivolous Opposition open to a blackmailing Ulster constabulary. Like the first Earl of Essex, and many English in Ireland since, Sidney Perkins has allowed himself to be drawn into that terrain beyond reason, most desperate vortex of despond. **The Essex Factor** is redolent of those months in the late 1960s when the Civil Liberties movement in Ulster provided a gift of a stalking horse for the gunmen and bombers. Those who know Ulster will recognise the people, the passions and the pretensions. The ridicule is wisely realised. If a book is a weapon, every serviceman, policeman and would-be politician might usefully be armed with this one.

Caliban and the IRA also feature in **Ginger, You're Barmy.** Peacetime National Service is the subject of David Lodge's second novel, first published twenty years ago. The book reappears with a new intro-

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duction by Lodge who, like his narrator Jonathan Browne, was drafted into the Royal Armoured Corps shortly after obtaining a degree in English Literature. Jonathan's college contemporary (and, later, friend) Mike 'Ginger' Brady has an Irish Republican background. This is the 1950s, when Brylcreem abounded, gentlemen lifted the seat, and army officers would demand of their recruits, 'How many of you are virgins? Come on, put your 'ands up!'

Jonathan and Mike share the permanent state of physical exhaustion and mental depression of Basic Training. They find themselves billeted with some Regulars, among them the monster Mike calls Caliban whose favourite pastime is to bounce violently up and down on one of his mates simulating rape. In this unpromising atmosphere, after days occupied by PT and drill 'relieved by the odd lecture on firearms or VD', Jonathan tries to read the *Inferno* but finds it difficult to concentrate.

Lodge displays a range of delights offered by National Service in the Army. Quite apart from the curriculum and the company, there is the food – including shepherd's pie 'made from real shepherds', the solemn pantomime of inspection ('What's all this shit?' a leathery-faced sergeant inquires, pointing to a minute smear on a buckle), and endless variations on that coarse sarcasm that is the characteristic idiom of army life.

Though deemed potential officer material, both Browne and Brady eschew the path to a commission. The bookish Jonathan adopts a self-preserving, pragmatic approach to the two years' confiscation of freedom; Mike absconds, joins the IRA and ends up doing time for an unsuccessful raid on the armoury at the camp where Jonathan is a clerk. Meanwhile Jonathan has 'inherited' Mike's girlfriend Pauline, who generally exudes a healthy normality. The futilities of Catterick are contrasted with the sheltered cosiness of Jonathan's background and weekends off.

As a critic Lodge has expressed his belief in historically rooted detail as a source of strength and a valuable discipline for novelists. He has practised what he preaches. The violence and pathetic feudalism of peacetime National Service is part of the experience of most British men now aged between 40 and 55. Lodge, like Morrow, is an accomplished comedian and *Ginger, You're Barmy* is worth re-issuing for that reason alone. But it is also a study in some particulars of subsidised sadism, a relatively neglected dimension of our jingoistic heritage. □

Among this week's contributors:

JOHN LUCAS is head of the Department of English and Drama at Loughborough University. His books include *The Melancholy Man* and *The Literature of Change*.

ROBERT HUTCHISON's *The Politics of the Arts Council* was published recently by Sinclair Browne at £7.95 and £3.50.

PETER KELLNER is political editor of the *NS* and co-author of *The Civil Servants* (Raven/McDonald, 1980).

THE PRESS: Peter Kellner

No trade secrets

Powers of the Press by MARTIN WALKER *Quartet* £15

'No reader of my newspaper should ever be surprised', observed Adolph Ochs, founder of the modern *New York Times*. That is, all major upheavals in national and international affairs have a history and a build-up; good newspapers should report that build-up and so be able to warn of impending change.

In **Powers of the Press,** Martin Walker sets out to describe how 12 leading newspapers round the world function and to assess how far they uphold Ochs's maxim. The choice of papers is, as Mr Walker admits, somewhat arbitrary. *The Times* is there, but not the *Guardian; Pravda* but not the *People's Daily*. Even so, a compendium of useful, highly readable information is assembled in one place.

At the end of the book, Mr Walker takes one subject – the fall of the Shah of Iran – and compares the quality of reporting in the 12 papers through the 1970s. Only *Le Monde* emerges with much credit for charting the country's mounting tensions. (*Guardian* readers may note that a recent feature 'based' on *Powers of the Press* contained a – justifiably – complimentary section on the *Guardian* itself. That was added for the article, and does not appear in the book.)

Why did most papers fail so dismally? Mr Walker's answer is too brief and superficial. Despite his remarkable application to the task of reading and distilling *what* the paper wrote, he offers only lame and predictable explanations for *why* they wrote it – they saw news as single 'impact' events, rather than the unfolding of slow social processes; western observers lack the capacity or inclination to take the Arab world seriously, except as sources of oil and terrorists; and so on – true, but scarcely original points.

That kind of failing permeates the whole book. Precisely because Mr Walker has assembled so many facts, historical quirks and vignettes about each paper, it is the more frustrating that he bustles from each batch of information to the next without pausing to explain why things worked out as they did. For example, Mr Walker cites *Le Monde*'s bravery in publishing stories of torture in Algeria in 1957, and the same paper's chronic misjudgment in suppressing reports of genocide in Kampuchea in the late 1970s. But we are given no useful account of how either editorial judgment came about or any explanation for the remarkable difference between the two episodes.

As a journalist I found much riveting information in *Powers of the Press*. What non-journalists will make of it, I'm not so sure. Perhaps Mr Walker is engaged in a cunning, subtle plot to conceal from the outside world the true secrets of our trade. If, that is, there are any. □

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ROCK MUSIC: Mary Harron

Nostalgia of mud

IN THE early Seventies Tom Wolfe looked about him and saw that the young middle classes were dressing up as Indian peasants, lumberjacks, fishermen, Apaches; he called it funky chic, a revamped version of *nostalgie de la boue.* Ten years on Vivienne Westwood, Malcolm McLaren's partner in crime and the woman who created the original punk style, has opened a new shop called, flatly, Nostalgia of Mud.

This monument to the new primitivism is situated off Bond Street, and the prices are high – but then upward mobility, commerce and success are also back in fashion. Westwood told *Honey* magazine, 'I like to think that I make the rich look poor and the poor look rich!' Right now she is selling T-shirt dresses with African style prints, loincloth skirts, buccaneer jackets and Arabian style draperies. Next season it's the Buffalo Girl look: raw sheepskins, Cossack layered skirts, bruised leather. As for the meaning of mud, Westwood (who is, it must be said, a brilliant designer) explains vaguely, 'It's a kind of primal thing – a synthesis. A sort of mixture of basic elements – like earth and water – that's what it's all about.Going back to basics. . . It's a ritual. A celebration. Primitive and simple.'

The words 'primitive', 'ethnic', 'tribal' all have a patronising ring, based on a romantic notion of the earthy vitality, freedom and spontaneity of anyone who lives without running water and scratches a living from subsistence farming. The great illusion and danger in Primitive Chic is that by adopting the dress of a Peruvian peasant or African tribe you can put on their culture as well. From this stems the awful self-righteousness of the hippies: 'We scorn your corrupt Western values, for we are wearing flowing robes (bought on holiday in Nepal) and are in touch with higher truths.' A similar attitude can be seen among today's white rastas, the Holland Park bohemians, with their dreadlocks and reggae albums: all the glamour of oppression, without having to be black.

But there are differences between the ethnic fads of the 1960s and those of the 1980s. The sitar apart, the hippies' infatuation with the East had little impact on music. The focus was on mysticism, on values, on ways of being, as a generation of American children brought up on drive-in hamburgers and Walt Disney tried to create a new rural utopia. Today the focus is on music and style; there is little talk about setting up tribal communities in the Welsh mountains, although that may come.

Malcolm McLaren started the English fashion for African music when he told a punk failure called Adam Ant to listen to some import records by the Warrior Drummers of Burundi. Even before that there were hints that Africa was the next continent that rock would plunder for its ideas – since its rhythms had come from Africa in the first place, there wasn't the problem as with Indian music of approaching an alien tradition.

Sieve Rapport

Drummers of Burundi

Right now Island Records are leading the field with their *Sound d'Afrique* compilations, and the new album by King 'Sunny' Ade. The real surprise has been how Latin the sound is, how much cross fertilisation there has been between the continents that rock has ignored. There is salsa here, and elements of jazz and Western pop: a billion transistor radios and record players are blasting all over the world, and as British teenagers discover ethnic cultures, those cultures are changing irrevocably under the impact of the electronic age.

The most poignant of the new releases is *Soweto* on Rough Trade Records, a compilation of recordings made in a make-shift studio in the back of a store in South Africa. The notes describe police harassment, beatings, record company exploitation and the dispersal of many of the groups – which makes it unlikely they'll ever be able to collect their royalties. It is hard to describe the spirit in this record without becoming sentimental, but it has the power that songs have when they are the only outlet, when music seems to be as great a need as food and water.

IT IS an old story that black musicians make the sound and white musicians make the money, but it may not always be that way. The WOMAD festival ('A World of Music Art and Dance') held in Shepton Mallet last month was the first rock festival in this country to provide 'ethnic' music, from a dozen different countries, from the source. Some of these musicians can be heard on a double album, *Music and Rhythm* released by WEA. Because it coincided with a rail strike the festival was a financial disaster and the backers (including Pete Gabriel) lost a packet. But for anyone who was there it was a momentous event, a turning point. And for a Westerner it was a relevation, and a disturbing one; sitting on the grass and hearing the sounds of different worlds floating through the air, you felt your own world shrinking.

In the past my first reaction when faced with a record of ethnic music has been to toss it aside guiltily and put on the Marvelettes. The Balinese National orchestra, admirable as it is, is still not my idea of listening pleasure. What I *enjoyed* most that weekend was Prince Nico Mbarga singing Nigerian pop songs that could easily – and should – be heard on Radio One. It was the event as a whole that mattered, and its dream-like atmosphere.

Set in an agricultural fairground, the main avenue had a carnival gaudiness, all candy floss and popcorn and cheap trin-

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kets, mixed with flashbacks of old hippy festivals. At least three generations mingled inside the health food tent. A white haired couple in their 60s sat over brown rice; high minded, vegetarian, no doubt interested in Buddhism and the east. A hippy mother with a worn face and worn embroidered Indian dress tried to control two grubby children with painted faces. The younger generation mixed punk with Nostalgia of Mud, or variations. And, as all these loin cloths and djalabis wandered past, the Warrior Drummers of Burundi arrived in smart matching summer suits, looking for all the world like airline stewards.

The Burundi Drummers, whose art is passed down from father to son, now spend much of their time at international festivals. Their ferociously impressive display, however, begged the question what does a musical ritual mean when it is divorced from its original context and purpose? In the end it becomes folklore, enshrined as an official cultural exhibit. The Chinese song and dance troupe Tian Jin twirled on the outside stage like exquisite little dolls, in a dance that must bear as little relation to life in the People's Republic as morris-dancing does in ours. Efforts had been made to forge a link between the past and present; my favourite song was called, 'If You Want To Meet Me Please Come to Our Youth Brigade.'

Whether the performances came from an embalmed or a living tradition, the impression one had was of subtlety, discipline and order. Ironically, whenever a modern rock-based group like Pigbag takes on the ethnic mode they always interpret it as 'wild', 'tribal': a 60s freak-out. Watching the hippy families flailing about in an improvised free-form dance to an Irish jig was a reminder of how sloppy rock treatment of folk culture has been. All folk dances have steps, routines that must be learnt, and little in common with our notions of free-expression.

There will be no repeat of the Sixties and there is no telling what this new cultural confusion will produce. Sometimes exciting things happen through mis-translation. But that night, as I wandered around the fields, I saw the light from a hundred tents, and heard the sound of clumsy, enthusiastic but insistent tribal drumming. The hippies are restless again. □

Paul Groves

The suffering

The grief box says it all. Smashed
cars, trapped drivers; presidents shot
in dawn raids; pop stars who cashed
their last chips and strode out

of this earthly casino, the game
of chance over at last. Switch
off the grief box. Your life is the same
as yesterday – boring, without a hitch.

DANCE: Stephanie Jordan

Variations in style

Paris Opera Ballet
London Festival Ballet

Until recently, the glory of **Le Ballet de L'Opéra de Paris** was in its distant past. Its tradition, the longest of any European company, began in 1669 with the foundation of the Opéra, and France was established as the chief source of balletic innovation until the mid-19th century. Today, after a period of eclipse, the company performs works by major contemporary choreographers and is restored to eminence. As proof of its illustrious past, director Rosella Hightower chose to bring *La Sylphide,* the ballet first performed in Paris in 1832, made for the great Romantic ballerina Marie Taglioni by her father Pierre, reconstructed in 1972 by Pierre Lacotte from drawings and notations. To the music of Schneitzhöffer and designs after Cicevi, James, a Highlander, deserts his fiancée Effie, having been seduced by the beauties of the Sylph. But Madge, a witch whom James has insulted, gives him a magic scarf with which he captures the Sylph, thereby destroying her. He is left with neither mortal bride nor immortal lover.

The dancers are all well-schooled and exceptionally attractive. Ghislaine Thesmar and Michael Denard offer convincing interpretations of the main characters, but delightful too is the second cast, Jean-Pierre Franchetti and Elisabeth Platel, especially the latter, the youngest *étoile,* who possesses all the virtues of natural lightness, precision and appealing characterisations of pathos and coquetry. *Sylphide* also offers considerable opportunities for other soloists: an extensive role for Effie, a long *pas de deux* in Act I, all danced with finesse and charm.

However, there are problems. In the 1830s, audiences would recognize in the Sylph the embodiment of the Romantic's unfulfilled aspirations. Today, played in the grand opera house manner, plot and characters have lost much of their vitality. Despite not attempting rigid authenticity, Lacotte's Sylph is hardly elusively stage-managed, James is a jolly, boyish fellow instead of a dreamer, the crofters too proper and polished. In Act II, there are flying and tree sylphs in addition to those who dance, all pretty figurines, but, after the endless successions of solos, duets and ensembles, the significance of the scarf's appearance is greatly diminished. Neither the plot development nor the timing work as well as they should in a production of this scale.

Of course, the company and the piece have not experienced the mutual benefit of growing together over many decades; the dancers offer an unclear and apparently imposed version of 19th-century style. By contrast, at the Royal Festival Hall the **London Festival Ballet** has gained immeasurably from the unbroken heritage of the Royal Danish Ballet, their *Sylphide* produced by the Dane Peter Schaufuss after August Bournonville. In 1836, the far-sighted Bournonville had recognized the potential of the French *Sylphide,* taking it to Copenhagen, but improving its dramatic detail and commissioning a more distinguished score by Lövenskjold. This production is rich in information and colour, fast and thrilling. The homely, joyous dance style, admittedly unnatural to the French dancers, clearly suits the London company. On the opening night, Schaufuss and Eva Evdokimova were exemplary in the main roles, another Danish guest Niels Bjorn Larsen, a comical yet deadly Madge, the young Mary McKendry notable as a pliant and musical leading Sylph.

John Neumeier's *Le Songe d'un nuit d'été* was the other work presented by POB. It belongs to a later generation than Balanchine's equivalent full-length work which begins in the forest and ends with a celebration at the court of Theseus, or Ashton's *The Dream,* which is in one act, confined to the forest, dropping Theseus and Hippolyta altogether. Unlike the other two choreographers, Neumeier distinguishes the mortals and the fairies by accompanying the fairy antics with Ligeti's starbursts and nebulae. Mendelssohn, used as before to accompany classical balletic language, contrasts appropriately with the static Ligeti and contemporary motions of the fairy folk. I overlook for now the exercise of ignoring and abusing the clearly literal references in the music to 'ass', 'fairies', 'lovers'.

The whole central action of the forest sequence is now Hippolyta's dream, wherein she becomes Titania, Theseus Oberon, Philostrate, Master of Revels, Puck. The court action is reminiscent of Empress Josephine's, especially the final scene based couturially by Jörgen Rose upon David's *Coronation of Napoleon.* The fact that the four Attic lovers manage to resolve their problems during Hippolyta's coincidental dream does not trouble Neumeier, nor do the anachronistic Mayhewesque mechanicals plus barrel organ playing Verdi and Suppé. A sloppy contempt permeates the ballet. Clownish Puck dons Helena's spectacles, stumbling on to the stage apron, dangling legs into the orchestra. During the *Ruy Blas* overture, quoted in full to accompany Demetrius' change of heart for Helena, Puck enters with cling-film umbrella, while thunder claps loudly drown the music. Limitless excess and a bland athletic vocabulary are employed to keep an audience smirking for three hours, assuaging its thirst for grand classical ballet. By also tossing it chunks of quasi-modern dance posturing. Neumeier flatters its desire to be thought educated, its tastes catholic. For all the spectacular stagecraft and costumes, the ballet rarely offers any evidence of craftsmanship or commitment to meaning. The ballet does suggest the potential of the whole company. How frustrating then to have been denied an opportunity to experience the undoubted range of skills of these dancers in more satisfactory works. □

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THEATRE: Christopher Edwards

Gentleman prince

Hamlet by SHAKESPEARE *Young Vic*
Uncla Vanya by CHEKHOV *Haymarket*
O Eternal Return by GRUPO DE TEATRO MACUNAIMA *Riverside*

Edward Fox's patrician **Hamlet** serves as a welcome antidote to the last, modish incarnation of the Prince I saw in this theatre, where he was played as a *Beano*-reading delinquent in a Wittenberg T-shirt. Fox also offers a striking contrast to Jonathan Pryce's powerful study at the Royal Court a couple of years ago – a dangerous, fretful, intellectual spiv of a Prince whom somebody immediately, and fatuously, dubbed the 'Hamlet of the Eighties'. The role is, notoriously, the hoop through which actors (and some actresses) feel compelled to jump, and Fox, perhaps fearing that his appearances in all those TV costume dramas were turning him into a clothes-horse, has decided to remind us of his range as a stage actor. Well, I don't think the range *is* that extensive really, although he undoubtedly weaves a dignified spell which is all his own.

The first impression is striking. Fox is no suburban oik masquerading as royalty; he has the reflexive hauteur of a pukka aristocrat, and I can't think of a contemporary actor whose manner and expression are so resolutely *un*-contemporary as his. He makes Claudius seem an arriviste as well as a usurper. His diction is exquisite, but the voice small; vocally he gives very little away, leaving most of his profounder emotions as a matter for the spectator's inference. His face barely registers the passage of feeling either (a narrowing of the eyes here, a twisting of the lips there), and the occasion when he throws his head forward so that his blond hair falls over his eyes seems wildly extravagant. His character fits his mien – pensive, sad but not sullen; hesitant, aloof; above all of course Hamlet remains the gentleman, even when abusing Ophelia. The abuse lies in the words; the manner is quite mild: there is no harshness anywhere in Hamlet's nature. All this is very dignified, very restrained (Hazlitt would have been happy with it), but in the end it is all very anaemic too. Fox certainly gives a close reading of the text (though he gabbles at times), but his rigorous formality left me stone cold. Still, he dies, like a gentleman, searching out a comfortable chair to expire in, after Laertes wounds him. I almost expected him to cross his legs.

For the rest, I liked John Boswall's Polonius – severe with his children (the advice to Laertes is played straight), and only becoming a figure of mockery when busying himself foolishly around court. Niki Kay's candid Ophelia was timid when sane, and not much different when her wits had gone. The period costumes were striking against a bare stage and the gravedigger's scene was excellently done by Esmond Knight. But as for the fight at the end . . . No-one expected a Douglas Fairbanks extravaganza, but this tentative piece of incompetent poking between the best swordsmen in Denmark was pretty feeble.

Chekhov demands the sort of subtle orchestration usually only found in a disciplined ensemble company. With that in mind I half expected this West End, star-packed revival of **Uncle Vanya** to ignore the delicate harmonies in favour of solo runs; but nothing of the sort happens.

To the sound of birdsong and a wistful guitar melody, the lights come brightly up on the wooden porch of Professor Serebriakov's country house. It is an oppressively hot summer's day, the old nurse sits knitting, and Ronald Pickup's Astrov paces restlessly between the samovar and the garden swing, complaining that he is growing old and coarse. Later he grows impressively in authority and vitality, but in these opening moments he and the nurse neatly set the tone for the evening – domestic, poignant, and filled with a sense of lost opportunities.

Donald Sinden is a witty, miserable and pathetic Uncle Vanya. Only once in the play does he show a flash of potent outrage at his condition (when the Professor, Harry Andrews, casually announces the sale of the estate); but even this is instantly demolished by his own farcical impotence as he fires *twice* at the parasitical old egotist, and misses both times. Most of the time Sinden teeters on the edge of childish regression with his hands tucked helplessly between his knees. Sheila Gish plays a coolly fastidious Elena (the beautiful, bored second wife of the Professor) and there is a lovely mournful, wheezing 'Waffles' from Bill Frazer. I objected to the North American anachronisms in John Murrel's otherwise free flowing translation, but this is a first rate production with a powerful Sonya from Frances de la Tour. Her closing speech is as tough and as poignant a piece of consolation as was ever wrenched from a broken heart.

Last week I praised **Grupo de Teatro Macunaima**'s eponymous comic extravaganza. This week they presented the second part of their touring programme, a pair of bourgeois domestic tragedies by Nelson Rodrigues. Both plays are highly charged, surrealistic investigations into the murky depths of Brazilian family life before the war. Gutter jokes abound, as do themes of incest, murder and rape; in other words the text is crucial this time, with a corresponding loss for those without Portuguese. However, the gestural expressiveness and visual delights are as arresting as before, and, if the Riverside reprieve holds out as expected, this exciting company will be in residence until 22 August. □

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

The index to Vol. 102 (July-December 1981) is now available, price £1.25, post free, from the publisher: 10 Great Turnstile, London, WC1V 7HJ.
The index to Vol. 103 (January-June 1982) will be available in September.

ARCHITECTURE: Jules Lubbock

Nuts & bolts

British Architecture 1982 *Royal Institute of British Architects, Portland Place, until 27 August*

Architecture may be the mother of the arts but it is also part of a major industry, construction, which has been in severe slump since 1973. New building is 40% down; housing is almost halved; and architects are only employed on one third of private industrial projects, one of the few stable sectors. The only boom is in stylistic polemics and the sale of paper projects as works of art. This is the background to an instant exhibition (participants had less than a week's notice) of real rather than paper projects by 50 leading post-modern British architects.

There are gleaming technological factories, using prefabricated systems, with details of nuts, bolts, girders and screw-threads which would have delighted a Victorian engineer, such as the Inmos electronics factory which is built on the principle of a suspension bridge by Richard Rogers, famous for his Centre Pompidou. But, like Inmos's own chips, the appearance of mass-production belies the reality. The components are not standardised, but tailor-made. 'Patera', a mass-produced construction kit for factories by another high-tech firm, Hopkins and Hunt, is omitted. Why?

The star of the show is Terry Farrell's model for the breakfast television company TV-AM with its neo-neon dropped keystone archway of tubular steel girders and its 20th-Century Fox logo. This is unashamed architecture-as-advertising, used on the firm's letter head – the fruit of Peter Jay's post-ambassadorial infatuation with all things American.

For the rest, there is a full range of revived Victorian styles applied with a bizarre sense of decorum; such as a ragstone 'church' with tower and crypt for another electronics manufacturer, and a shopping centre in Ealing which is a cross between a Tudor palace and a Hanseatic fort, complete with a moat and bastionated gateway leading to the multi-storey car park.

Cambridge Econometrics have proposed a £12bn boost to construction as the means of creating the most jobs with the least impact upon imports. Could British architects meet the challenge? In variety and imagination they are outstanding. Yet, belying the obvious differences between high-tech and period styles, all share a hankering for Victorian imagery – suspension bridges or bastions. They also delight in virtuosity requiring custom-made parts, when what perhaps is needed is high-quality mass-produced components with which lesser architects could design 'good enough' buildings. What may be an aesthetic virtue is a symptom of our general disenchantment with industrialisation. It is Rolls-Royce rather than Toyota architecture. □

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TELEVISION: William Boyd

Ongoing situations

I DON'T like sit-coms, or, to be more precise, I don't like most sit-coms. Is it a sign of advancing age, I wonder, that makes me think that they don't make them like they used to? Rather as comedians reminisce fondly about music hall, or almost everybody remembers their childhood summers being longer and hotter, it seems to me that there has been a dearth of half-reasonable sit-coms in the last few years. One can get dewy-eyed about *Steptoe and Son* or *The Likely Lads, Dad's Army* and *Rising Damp*. Will ye no come back again?

It doesn't look like it – and perhaps they'd be well advised to stay away – if two new sit-coms I forced myself to look at last week are anything to go by. The first was **Nobody's Perfect** (LWT), a second series for this 'vehicle' for Elaine Stritch. *Nobody's Perfect* isn't really about anything, there isn't a concept or a situation upon which the thing is hung, unless you grant that the unlikely pairing of raucous Elaine Stritch and genial buffer Richard Griffiths is odd enough to be a plot generator. There's a batty char and a lounge-lizard friend, but nothing intrinsic to the set-up that's going to get things moving each week. This week's episode was a case in point, involving the ancient comic devices of misunderstanding and getting the wrong end of the stick. For some reason the Elaine Stritch character is called Bill; it's Bill's wedding anniversary and her husband (Griffiths) secretly books the two of them a meal in a restaurant called the Concorde. The char overhears and thinks he's talking about the plane. The wrong end of the stick is firmly grasped, the secret is whispered abroad and misconceptions flourish. Entirely unfunny and replete with sit-com's outrageous mugging and overblown acting styles, as if playing to a dim-witted, partially sighted audience in the back row of the upper circle.

Third Time Lucky (Yorkshire), by contrast, has gone overboard for situations. It features, as a central duo, Derek Nimmo and Nerys Hughes, a once-married couple who, *à la* Taylor/Burton, decide to get married again. In the interim, however, they have each married and divorced once more, and these ex-spouses have in turn married anew. You can see the exchanges coming a mile off. 'This is my ex-wife, we're engaged to be married', and endless variations on that theme. It's also coy and whimsical and extremely unamusing.

But why are these sit-coms so lamentable? If you take the four classics I mentioned in the first paragraph and add to them others like *The Good Life, George and Mildred* (variable), *It Ain't Half Hot Mum, Robin's Nest* (variable) and the early *Are You Being Served?* as a notional sit-com hall of fame of recent years can we arrive at any common denominator that can explain why this lot aren't bad and so many others fall by the wayside? Throw in some American competition, *Rhoda, WKRP, Taxi* and – very unfair – *Bilko*, showing how it should be done, and one factor becomes clear. In almost all of these series the humour is generated or fuelled by antagonism of one kind or another. One major character is hated or disliked by the others. Steptoe Sr., Rigsby, Captain Mainwaring automatically come to mind, but this factor also explains the more muted successes of the less-than-classics. It even explains the enjoyment that was derived from Elaine Stritch's last series, *Two's Company:* namely the running battle of wits between her and her butler Donald Sinden. *Nobody's Perfect* is clearly meant to cash in on the good will the former generated, but they left out the conflict. *Nobody's Perfect,* despite its title doesn't contain an ounce of malice. It's far too nice.

If this is a universal failing of bad sit-coms, it doesn't follow that a dash of malice and a pinch of antagonism will act as a catch-all. There's no substitute for developed characters and a good script either, as the recent repeats of *Bilko* prove on all three counts. *Third Time Lucky* has its antagonisms too – notably between Nimmo and his Scottish boss – but it will have to get a deal more fiery, and the boss less farcically charicatured, if it's going to rescue this execrable show.

There were a surprising number of idiosyncratic Scottish types in evidence on **Sin on Saturday** (BBC-1), among whom were a beauty queen, a topless fire-eater and a male stripper. Their presence was explained by this week's 'sin' which was lust. Bernard Falk, who should know better, hosted this appalling discussion in front of a studio audience during which, and with the assistance of certain guests, we were meant to be entertained and lightheartedly enlightened on the subject. Among the guests were an ex-nun, Linda Lovelace and two female rock singers who regaled us with a subtle little number called 'Bang, bang – shot full of love'. What we got was duff jokes, the worst sort of sniggering British smuttiness, crass armchair psychology, and utterly inept questioning from Falk. The whole thing was falling about his ears when, from a viewer's point of view, it was immeasurably enlivened by the appearance of a very tired and emotional Oliver Reed, who proceeded to dominate the show, doggedly reading a definition of lust from the OED – 'animinal d'sire, vocif, vocif'rous emoshuns' – which seemed to be all right by him. □

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FILMS: John Coleman

A head-on frame

The Colour of Pomegranates *ICA*

Sad word has it that Sergo Paradjanov, Soviet film-maker extraordinary, is in custody again. The previous occasion was in January, 1974, when he was charged with homosexuality, illegal currency dealings and 'incitement to suicide' (*what?*), and sentenced to six years in a hard labour prison camp in the Ukraine. Totalitarian regimes like life tidy: Paradjanov was and is by definition a confounded nuisance. The enormous success abroad of his Dovzhenko-influenced *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* – made in 1964, it surfaced at the Paris Pullman five years later and is currently revived at the ICA – furrowed many an official brow at home, where its Armenian director stood accused of a poem to Ukrainian nationalism. God knows what pretext the USSR's mind-monitors have found for putting Paradjanov away this time, but reasons would not be far to seek. After all, the unregenerate deviate had gone on, in 1969, to produce a second film that violated just about every rule in the socialist-realist book. The authorities shelved it for a while, before handing it gingerly to the veteran Sergie Yutkevitch to re-edit. In 1973 the dangerous work was allowed out on a short rein, into one third circuit repertory cinema in Moscow. Since when its reputation has grown and grown.

The Colour of Pomegranates, wrote Herbert Marshall in the Winter 1974/5 *Sight and Sound*, is 'a masterpiece . . .' Alas then for this 16mm Sovcolor print, by courtesy of Professor Marshall, reduced to 75 minutes, which gives only a muddied and glimmering sense of what may or may not be a great, onion-layered film. As hermetic as Tarkovsky's *Mirror* but probably less rewarding, the elliptical piece purports to trace moments in the strange career of a famed 18th-century Armenian troubadour who became a monk, then martyred archbishop, one Sayat Nova. There are intimations some parallel is intended with Paradjanov's own life, as the screen, very much a head-on frame, fills with a profusion of staggering images ranging from the hieratic and Byzantine to half-memories of Méliès and Buñuel. The poet as child is finely caught amid a groundwell of wind-fluttered books, seen peering into weird mound-shaped bath-houses as some early initiation into sex. Then he is a young man, amid the play-acting of the court: all's ritual. A woman may be his beloved, his Muse, then seems to swap genders with him. Sheep, as the most literal of flocks, tumble into a great church. There are blood sacrifices. But, the difficulties of missed allusions apart, how badly the colour keeps letting one down: those blear, ubiquitous blues, those ambiguous reds. Easier to render an account of its pre-history than of the event, in this event. □

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ART: John Spurling

Larger than life-size

Leon Golub: Mercenaries and Interrogations *ICA*

'Do these paintings represent American force, power, ruthlessness? I think the success of American art has to do with the success of the US as the number one power after 1946. This is an aggressive American art, the kind of art that Europeans have reason to suspect.' The interview with **Leon Golub** in the catalogue to his exhibition is full of such quotable extracts. Golub lives in a wider world than most artists and his relative obscurity until now when he is 60 may have something to do with it:

> I don't think I would be making paintings like these if I'd had a lot of success in the '60s and '70s because when things aren't working for you, you have to question what goes on, how you're operating, what are the limits.

His influences have been late Greek and Roman art ('Roman art in particular represented cosmopolitan urban culture under stress'), David and Caravaggio, Couture, Gérôme, Delaroche and – the only fashionable one among them – Picasso's *Guernica,* which he saw in his teens in Chicago as 'an example of what an artist in our time could do: that one could do something that big and strong and which stood out in terms of the world and what was going on'.

In a word, Golub is a history painter and seeing his work makes one realise how much art gave up when it abandoned that once pre-eminent area of its activity. For true history painting is not primarily concerned with costumes and archaeology, but with understanding the contemporary world and what is going on, either by analogy with what has happened in the past or by setting images charged with a traditional meaning in a modern context. Nor did history painting ever get away completely: it was appropriated by the stage, the cinema and television, leaving art that much the more limited in its scope and the less necessary to its customers. The three years since he began his recent series of paintings called *Mercenaries* and *Interrogations* have been, Golub tells us, 'a very good time. It's a good feeling to know that the work is aggressive enough to hold its own – I don't mean with other art but with reality, bare-ass reality'. When did we last look to a painter to hold his own with the bare-ass reality of war, politics, force, power?

Golub's figures are much larger than life-size – one's eyes are roughly on a level with their belts – painted thinly and two-dimensionally against a plain ground, usually red. The canvases are not on stretchers, but pinned to the wall like tapestries; the effect is somewhat fresco-like, distantly reminiscent both of Roman wall-painters and of that doyen of history-painting, Uccello. There are six paintings altogether, hung so as to enclose the gallery, though at first you are so overwhelmed by the individual scenes that you fail to take yourself into account. It was only when several other visitors, including some small children, joined me in the centre of the space that I realised how enclosed we were, that our little world of scuttering children, half-distracted mothers, holiday clothes, hand-in-hand couples was entirely bounded by these giants in uniform. Two of them, indeed, were actually looking down at us, grinning provocatively, gesturing towards the hooded, roped, naked victim in the chair at the centre of the action; the rest were too busy with what they were doing on the canvases, taunting each other, unwinding after a successful gun-fight, assaulting a bound and naked woman, beating an upside-down man over the genitals with a baton.

Golub began in the Fifties and Sixties with nude, unspecifically mythological figures in various forms of violent action. In the early Seventies he gave them some clothes and assigned them to Vietnam. These new figures are of all races, their uniforms all-purpose military, but each represents one of the many types of licensed aggression: here a middle-aged American cop-type, recognisable by his slouched posture, his haircut and his jowly face; here a dandified Latin with a thin black moustache, a piranha smile and slicked hair; there an earnest young English public-school hero with a prominent jaw and shiny brown boots; there again a stolid black, one of whose powerful forearms rests lightly on a machine-gun while the other holds a cigarette to the profile of a Roman Emperor or a Caliph's executioner.

In a smaller room beyond is a set of ordinary-size portrait heads of named individuals. These are the Olympians, the ones whose mistakes, machinations or direct orders set the giants in the first room to work: Franco, Pinochet, Kissinger, Dulles, Chou En-Lai, Rockefeller. There ought to be a great many more of them, of course, just as there is a very great deal more to be said about that immense world of violence and pain which surrounds our little Western bubble than Golub has yet had time to grapple with. But at least he has found a way of doing it. He has put us in touch again with the history to which we belong – Assyrians and Romans, Turks and Crusaders, Conquistadors and British and American Imperialists – and stripped away our pretence of being distant observers. Modern history painting can hardly be as innocent as it sometimes was in the past. Nor does it have anything to do with propaganda, for one side or the other. People with simple minds will accuse Golub of glorifying his mercenaries and interrogators. There is no answer to that, except to assert what such people can never understand, that bare-ass reality is many-layered and that any art which attempts to stand up to it must be many-layered too. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2732 **Set by Jerry Mander**

A new edition of Harrap's *Shorter French and English Dictionary* (£9.95) is to be published on 2 September, and Messrs Harrap have in their great generosity offered compers the chance to win this estimable 800-page volume. Since the book's end-papers are adorned with translations of proverbs *par exemple* 'once bitten twice shy' = *'chat échaudé craint l'eau froide'*, we suggest that you provide us with proverbs – not in English, not in French, but in *franglais* (with all due respect to Miles Kington whose book of same has just been published by Penguin). What is more, these proverbs should aspire to the highest standards of a noble Comp tradition in being very high-sounding and totally meaningless. By 27 August. PS: Mrs T letters by 20 August, please!

No 2729 **Set by Rev. O'Lachun**

Extracts from the Ladybird book *His Holiness Pope John Paul II* by Joan Collins.

Report **By Amazing Grace**

Too specific a comp. Too sun-soaked and sluggish a constituency. Very few got all three elements in, never mind wittily. Just one blue note each for those below.

The main thing about Pope John Paul II is that he is a *star* – not a little bit of light twinkling away up there in the sky at night – but a great big shining star here on earth. Being a star is far the most important thing in life. A star makes even plain, dull, ordinary people think they can be stars too – silly really, because of course they're far too plain, dull and ordinary! A star also gives ordinary people someone to love and envy and look up to, which is very good for them. So, by being a star, one is simply being very, very kind.

MARTIN FAGG

The Pope wears matching outfits of white silk. White is the colour of holiness. But he is a human being as well as a very godly person. I am sure he knows there is something special about the smooth touch of white silk on your skin. I used to wear it myself to meet important producers. It gives you that feeling of being 'on top'. And even Popes need a morale-booster. The Pope travels in a specially built car, the 'Popemobile'. It is very powerful, with a sleek shiny body and a wide back seat. I once had a car like it, but that is another story.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

His favourite saying is, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me . . .' He loves children so much that he wants parents to have more and more of them, and never stop having them. It isn't easy to be the Pope. He knows so many little children are hungry. He prays especially for them, and their hungry little pets too. Things would be a lot worse without all those prayers, don't you think? He loves grown-ups too. He prays for President Brezhnev, President Reagan and our own Mrs Thatcher. He even prays for film stars! What do you think of that?

T. GRIFFITHS

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As others see us . . .

Replies to our Readers' Questionnaire continue to come in. The free comments have given us a feeling of direct and personal contact with our readers, of a kind that journalists seldom have. The overwhelming impression is of a critical (often highly critical) readership, which is at the same time deeply loyal to and involved with the *NS*.

We thought that you would like to read at least a small cross-section of those comments. The selection is inevitably arbitrary and some of the comments have been edited to save space. But, though chosen at random, they do represent the main strands of your comments. We shall be relying on them in planning the future development of the magazine and are, therefore, very grateful to all of you who gave such obvious time and thought to your replies.

Hugh Stephenson

Mick Harrington, London SW19

I came upon the *NS* by accident and was amazed to find it was so informative and easy to read. The layout is excellent. I was glad to discover it wasn't full of ex-Oxbridge bores going on about their times in the old University, or being witty and pithy about important issues simply to show how clever they are.

David Quinn, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

Although the *NS* is an intellectual paper (and so it should be) sometimes too much knowledge is assumed in the editorials and foreign reports. Otherwise a good paper.

Peter Graham, Mourjou, France

The *NS* occasionally lapses into inverted snobbery, tinged with Puritanism . . . such as allusions to the extension of Sunday trading laws or licensing hours as somehow being anti-working class (still!) and bourgeois-inspired. But then I live abroad, where these things seem natural to both Left and Right.

V. L. Ross, Stoke-on-Trent

I work in a factory of 500 people and to my knowledge I'm the only one who reads the *NS*. Until your paper can reach the working people of this country, and for them to be able to read, to want to read it, the value of your articles will be lost to the people who are most affected.

Jim McMillan, East Kilbride

Ought to try to appeal to a wider audience, i.e. people like me who are not university educated, but who nevertheless cannot bear the garbage of the gutter press . . . Generally, though, an excellent voice and source of info and analysis for the left. 9 out of 10.

Carol Rowntree, Sheffield

The *NS* is not unique in providing an educated left point of view, but it is unique in combining it with investigative journalism and in appearing weekly . . . I would be alarmed if the left-wing outlook of the paper was diluted.

Robert McLelland, Cupar, Fife

I have been reading this journal since 1946 every week. If it should show any sign of supporting the SDP, then for me it will be goodbye and a soldier's farewell.

Andrew Westcott, London E9

Please don't slide back into a state of genteel Fabian torpor – there is much that we should all be properly and constructively angry about.

P. Stoke, Worplesdon, Surrey

It is ridiculous to ask how left-wing one is politically, without suggesting a scale. At a Liberal Party meeting I am left of centre; amongst *Telegraph* readers I am deep-dyed red; while some of your articles bring out the real blimp in me – but I'm glad of that.

P. J. Glasgow, London SW8

My dad from Sunderland thinks there are too many women writers – I disagree.

C. Moshenska, Hove, East Sussex

Bruce Page's and Peter Kellner's sneering anti-Benn material nearly made us cancel our subscription. Good riddance to Arthur Marshall and Christopher Hitchens. Women's rights is not just one among 25 issues . . . we need some understanding of the way women are excluded from what men think of as the mainstream of politics.

Al Kesterman, Sherwood, Nottingham

It varies tremendously according to author . . . Kellner is good but not excellent, Anna Coote is consistently excellent, Francis Wheen and Patrick Wintour often good, Duncan Campbell is very good – the others vary significantly in quality.

J. H. Carpenter, Worcester

Frankly I miss articles where the prose is memorable. I think back to when Crossman used to write – or Paul Johnson before he went 'bonkers'. Also I'd like more satire in the *Private Eye* tradition.

Mrs F. E. Ravenscroft, Wednesfield, West Midlands

In recent years the tone of the *NS* has changed: there is less regard for objective reporting and more propaganda regardless of honesty. While one wishes to see left-wing views stated, it should not be slanted reporting. I find McVicar's column offensive. P.S. I miss Arthur Marshall.

D. Gosnell, Sidcup, Kent

Sometimes issues are too black and white, e.g. councils always wrong, workers always right. Considering the price of hardback books, a regular paperback review section would be useful.

Miss A. F. Cook, London W5

I would welcome a livelier style of writing in many of the articles in the 'front half'. I look back fondly to the more vigorous and often more amusing approach of 8-10 years ago. The major exception to this criticism is Peter Kellner.

Wesley K. Wark, London NW1

1. Uphold the literary quality and intelligence of the back half. 2. Continue the tradition of investigative journalism in a left-wing spirit. 3. Develop the *NS* expertise on intelligence and security services – e.g. articles by Duncan Campbell. 4. Watch out for crude conspiracy theories – e.g. your current American correspondent.

Ivan Heyningen, Edinburgh, Scotland

It is as true now as it was in the '30s that the *NS* remains too much a paper for arts graduates, e.g. interested in literary criticism. Your first half criticises lack of science and technology, while the second half epitomises it.

A. Baker, Hastings, East Sussex

The *NS* has declined markedly since Kingsley Martin's time. In his day the political section was much weightier . . . And the literary section was a real treat. Now the sociological scribblers have taken over. ▶

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E. A. Whelan, Norwich, Norfolk

I think I would enjoy the rear section more, should it shed . . . a certain 'in group' narrowness which frequently mars it at the moment. As a non-Londoner (indeed an ex-Londoner), I often get the impression that the section is aimed at a very narrow group most of whom . . . are interested in a narrow range of London-centred activities.

David Musson, London SE15

Bruce Page did well – with his editorial team brought the *NS* back to life, gave the paper a sense of urgency and involvement . . . Cover more 'low' culture in back pages and get away from old-fashioned, detached, Oxbridge tone.

Thomas Murray, Wexford, Eire

Occasionally snooty . . . Sometimes given to sweeping assumptions ('all anti-abortionists are loony') . . . But necessary reading. Back half very good, especially Nightingale and Coleman (great). Please give us less original fiction; the *NS* is not the place for it . . . Let it not be fodder for left-wingers who wear badges.

K. J. Walker, St Albans, Herts.

Still miss A. Marshall's light touch and humour. The original poetry is a 'good thing'. Book reviews are consistently high standard. Thank God for the Weekend Competition. The distribution people need to keep on their toes to ensure that the *NS* gets into the post to arrive before the week-end.

Alex Brand, Camperdown, Dundee

I have not forgiven you for excising the crossword . . . I don't like your personal column. Some of it is altogether too bloody personal.

R. W. Smith, Trawden, Lancs.

Quite often the *NS* is critical of left-wing arguments, e.g. Tony Benn's views. Rather than simply be critical, I'd like to see some alternative policies put forward as well.

Denis Roberts, Goring, West Sussex

Why not invite readers to write articles? I should like to see contributions from writers who have experience of Labour and progressive organisations. Much can be learned from those which achieved popularity for a specific purpose, e.g. the New Left Book Club.

K. Brown, Brighton, Sussex

It would be good to see more articles that investigate the political and ideological nature of food, music, architecture, TV, science, sport, language, and all the other things that are of more day-to-day importance in most people's life than 'work'. After all, only a minority (49.9 per cent) of the population work.

J. Richards, Northolt, Middlesex

Bretécher should be replaced by more letters . . . I and many others in the state pension bracket would welcome the odd article enlightening your more affluent (mainly middle-class?) readers as to how the state looks after the elderly poor.

Mrs J. Dearden, Harrogate, N. Yorks.

Do not react too much to readers' wishes – you should be opinion formers.

Francis Hawkins, East Grinstead, Sussex

Continue to please, educate, infuriate and keep relatively sane your faithful readers.

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The vacancy is for a period of six months commencing as soon as possible. A good honours degree in a relevant subject and experience in the following areas is preferred:-
Use and interpretation of statistical and economic information; Drafting of reports and recommendations.

The person appointed will have a commitment to the trade union movement. Experience in (or detailed knowledge of) the Civil Service, British Telecom, or other public sector organisations would be an additional advantage. The salary for the post will be **£6,833 per annum plus London Weighting (currently £1,144 per annum).**

Full details and an application form may be obtained from:
Jane McIntosh, Personnel Officer,
CPSA, Park House,
64-66 North Side Wandsworth Common, London SW18 2SH
Tel: 01-874 0494

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 27 August 1982.

BRITISH TRANSPORT OFFICERS' GUILD

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Applications are invited for the post of Assistant Secretary of the B.T.O.G. The successful candidate will be expected to conduct negotiations on behalf of Guild members, to carry out research and to participate actively on the development of the policies and organisation of B.T.O.G.

Salary: **£5,400-£8,055 p.a.**

Application forms available from: General Secretary, B.T.O.G., Rooms 305-307, West Side Offices, King's Cross Station, London N1 9AX.

Closing date: MONDAY, 23 AUGUST, 1982

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

The British Association of Occupational Therapists is a certificated independent trade union with members in the National Health Service and Local Government. Applications are invited for the post of:

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER
(Training and Research)

The successful applicant will work under the direction of the Senior Industrial Relations Officer and will be primarily responsible for the provision of a research facility; and the organisation of training and providing support for the Association's growing network of Stewards and Health and Safety Representatives. It is anticipated that the post will have scope for both personal and role development.

The salary for the post starts at **£7,207** rising by seven annual increments to **£9,119** per annum with five weeks' holiday and statutory bank holidays.

For application form and further details please write to:

Mr. Derek Addison
Senior Industrial Relations Officer
British Association of Occupational Therapists
20 Rede Place, London W2 4TU

The closing date for completed application forms is 6 September, 1982.

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

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13-21 August

SEND DETAILS to: NS FREE LISTINGS at least 7 days in advance

FRI 13 AUGUST

LONDON SW1. 'The Joy of Mooching' continues with 'Animal Magic', 'Kray Brothers', 'Da Gamba'. ICA, The Mall. Tel: **01-930 3647.**

LONDON SW1. TEENAGE KICKS – a series of films about youth frustration today – continues with 'UndeRage' (UK 1982) plus 'Scum' (UK 1979). 6.30 p.m. £2.50. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

SAT 14 AUGUST

14 AUGUST-18 SEPTEMBER. NOTTINGHAM. 'New Art Platform 2'. Exhibition to promote work of artists not previously exhibited widely. Midland Group Nottingham, 24-32 Carlton Street. **0602-582636.**

LONDON SW1. Film 'Superman' (UK 1980) £1.25. 2.30 p.m. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

SUN 15 AUGUST

BRIGHTON. 'Film & Psychoanalysis' season of screenings and discussions 'The Conformist' (Bertolucci). £1.50 (£1 u/w). 7 p.m. Hanover Centre, Southover St.

LONDON SW1. Concert – Trio Canello, with Quentin Poole, Myrha Saxophone Quartet, One plus One. Playing pieces by young composers – John Harle, Helen Roe, Sinan Sivaskan, Nicholas Wilson. 8 p.m. £3. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

TUES 17 AUGUST

LONDON EC3. TUESDAYS till 30 NOVEMBER. BILLINGSGATE EXCAVATION. Lunchtime talks, news on progress and developments. 1.10 p.m. 25p. Public Viewing Gallery, Lower Thames Street. Information – Museum of London. **01-600 3699** ext. 240. Public gallery open daily.

17-19 AUGUST, LONDON SW1. 'Actual 82'. Jazz Festival inc. George Lewis Group, Irene Schweizer Quartet, Billy Bang and more. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

LONDON SW1. Rock Video. Island Records clips inc. Kid Creole, 3 Courgettes, Sting, Buggles, Tom Petty & Secret Policeman's Ball. Virgin clips inc. OMD, Human League, Devo, Sparks. Plus independent videos. 6.30 p.m. £1.25. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

WED 18 AUGUST

18-20 AUGUST, LONDON SW1. Films – 'UndeRage', plus 'Somebody's Daughter' (UK 1978). 6.30 p.m. £2.50. ICA, The Mall. **01-930 3647.**

LONDON SW1. 'Labour and the House of Lords' – Reg Underhill. Central London Fabian Soc., 11 Dartmouth St. 7.30 p.m.

THURS 19 AUGUST

BATHGATE, W. LOTHIAN. Peace March Scotland reaches Bathgate from Shotts. Reception/rally 6 p.m. Skrs. – Tam Dalyell, Eric Clarke. Meadows Park. **031-228 1386.**

FRI 20 AUGUST

EDINBURGH. Peace March Scotland arrives Sighthill Park at 7.30 p.m. Social in Wester Hailes Education Centre, 9 p.m. Music, sketches, theatre.

SAT 21 AUGUST

EDINBURGH. Peace March Scotland. Assemble 9.30 a.m. Sighthill Park. Festival and rally 1 p.m. in The Meadows. Speakers, music, etc. **031-557 4283.**

21-22 AUGUST, ALFRISTON, SUSSEX. S.E. England Cider & Beer Festival. London ales and Ciders from S.E. England. Noon-6 pm. £2.50. English Wine Centre, Drusillas Corner. **0323 870532.**

FORTHCOMING

22 AUGUST, EDINBURGH. Nuclear Free Scotland Activist Conference, at Rudolf Steiner School. Details – SCRAM **031-557 4283.**

22 AUGUST, FARNHAM, SURREY. William Cobbett Society organising expedition to retrace Rural Rides, Hants-Surrey border. Details: Secretary, The Museum, West St.

26-27 AUGUST, EDINBURGH. Radio Meeting Challenges: 3rd Annual Edinburgh International Radio Festival. Contact Jamie Jauncey on 0672 810034 or **01-439 9756.**

28 AUGUST, PORTSMOUTH. Radio Victory Free Folk and Caelidh in the Guildhall Square. Features Maddy Prior. Tel. **0705-834184.**

28-29 AUGUST, 4-5 SEPT. Krishnamurti speaks at Brockwood Park, Bramdean, Nr. Alresford, Hants. Q&A meetings 31 Aug., 2 Sept.

AUGUST, NIGHTLY. LONDON SW13. Live Jazz at *the 'Bulls Head', Lonsdale Road.*

TUESDAYS till 30 NOVEMBER, LONDON EC3. Lunchtime talks 1.10 p.m. on progress of BILLINGSGATE EXCAVATION. 25p. Public Viewing Gallery, Lower Thames Street. Public viewing daily.

1 SEPTEMBER. LONDON SW1. 'Euro-elections' – Richard Balfe, MEP. Cent Lond. Fabian Soc. County Hall. 7.30 p.m.

3-5 SEPTEMBER. HERTS. CND Campaign Training Skills Weekend. £7. Canon Frome, Ledbury. Details: **0272 513631.**

4-5 SEPTEMBER. ALFRISTON, SUSSEX. English Vineyard Wine Festival. Noon-6 pm. £3. English Wine Centre, Drusillas Corner. **0323 870532.**

4-8 SEPTEMBER. LONDON to BRIGHTON – Workers March Against Racism from Brick Lane to TUC Conference in Brighton. Details **01-274 3951. W.A.R.**

6 SEPTEMBER, LONDON W1. 'Ladies and Nurses in the Crimean War.' History Workshop Seminar. 6.45pm. Upstairs at the Black Horse, 6 Rathbone Place.

10-12 SEPTEMBER. MATLOCK. Conference – 'The Politics of Information.' Spkrs.: Phillip Whitehead MP., Peter Hennessey, David McKie, Prof. Anthony King, Dr Tony Barker. Details: Politics Association, 14 Wakefield Close, Strood, Rochester, Kent.

14 SEPTEMBER. LONDON W12. W.E.A. Course, "The Personal and the Political". 10 weeks, Tuesdays from 14 Sept. 6.30 pm. Project Enterprise, 23 Askew Cres.

15 SEPTEMBER. LONDON WC1. 'Tribune Today' – Jon Lansman. Cent. Lond. Fabian Soc. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place. 7.30 p.m.

17 SEPTEMBER, LETCHWORTH, HERTS. 'Labour's Programme 1982' – Michael Meacher MP, 8pm. 50p. Brotherhood Hall, Gernon Rd.

17-19 SEPTEMBER. SHEFFIELD. A.C.W. Conference – 'Community Health Issues'. 60 workshops. Food, accommodation, creche, entertainment. Details: Victoria Grandon **0742 77870.**

25 SEPTEMBER, MANCHESTER. 'Foreign Policy Implications of British Nuclear Disarmament', Dayshool at Withington Adult Education Centre, Maulideth Rd., M14. 10am-4pm. Details: 59 Tintern Ave., Manchester M20 8ND.

1 OCTOBER. LONDONDERRY. Goldsmiths' Holography Workshop. A touring show of Holograms opens at the Orchard Gallery. Details: **01-733 3716.**

2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'Defence Policies in the '80s' 9.30 a.m.-4 p.m. Dayschool – speakers include April Carter, Anthony Arblaster, John Field, Phil Asquith, Mary Kaldor. At Bow Centre. **0742-322690.**

2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'The Peace Movement after the Falklands' Public meeting. Speakers include E. P. Thompson, Kate Soper, Richard Carbon MEP, Jean McCrindle. 7.30 p.m. City Hall. **0742-615388.**

4 OCTOBER. LONDON W1. 'A Social Democratic Interpretation of History' – Peter Clarke. History Workshop seminar. 6.45 p.m., Upstairs at the 'Black Horse', 6 Rathbone Place.

6 OCTOBER. LONDON WC1. 'Labour after Conference' – Reg Race MP. Central Lond. Fabian Soc. 7.30 pm. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place.

16-17 OCTOBER. LONDON. 2nd Women & Computing Conference. Details: **01-439 4242,** ext. 101.

20 OCTOBER. LONDON SW1. 'Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform' – Austin Mitchell MP. Central Lond. Fabian Soc., 7.30 pm. 11 Dartmouth St.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates etc.

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